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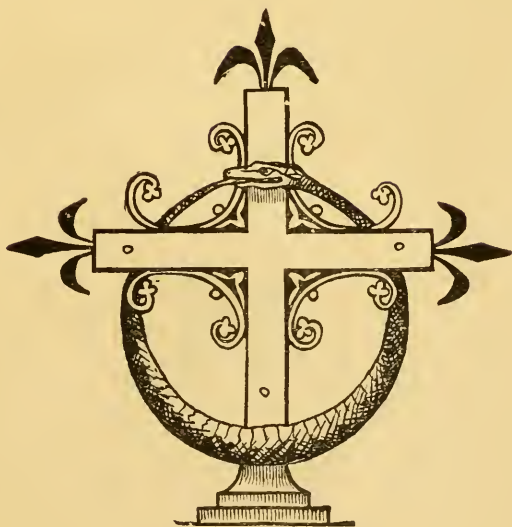








THE  
CONFESSIONS OF S. AUGUSTINE.



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# THE CONFESSIONS

OF

✓  
S. AUGUSTINE

BOOKS I. - X.



*A REVISED TRANSLATION*



GRIFFITH, FARRAN, OKEDEN & WELSH

(SUCCESSORS TO NEWBERRY AND HARRIS)

WEST CORNER ST PAUL'S CHURCHYARD, LONDON

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To the  
VENERABLE BROUGH MALTBY,  
ARCHDEACON OF NOTTINGHAM,  
AS TO ONE WHO KNOWS MANY BOOKS  
AND LOVES THEM,  
AND SEEKS THE BEST BOTH OF  
OLD AND NEW,  
THIS LIBRARY OF ANCIENT AND MODERN  
THEOLOGICAL LITERATURE  
Is Respectfully Inscribed  
BY HIS FAITHFUL SERVANT,  
MINDFUL OF MANY KINDNESSES,  
THE EDITOR.

*Michaelmas, 1886.*

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## P R E F A C E.

**S**AINTE AUGUSTINE, the "Doctor of Grace," was born in the year 354, at Thagaste in Numidia, and the incidents of his early life up to the thirty-third year of his age form much of the matter of this book. After his conversion, upon the interruption of his journey to Africa by his mother's death, which is recorded in the ninth book of the "Confessions," he turned back for a while to Rome, but returned to Thagaste about the year 390, where for some time he lived a retired life in community with some of his friends. At length, though very reluctantly, thinking that the excesses of his youth were a disqualification for holding office in the Church, in obedience to the great desire of Valerius, Bishop of Hippo, and the Christian Church in that place, he consented to be ordained to the priesthood, and was soon raised to the Episcopate as coadjutor with Valerius, at whose death he succeeded to the Bishopric.

The three great heresies of the Manichæans, Arians, and Pelagians, and the Donatist schism, during the life-time of S. Augustine, menaced the Catholic Faith: of his association with the Manichæan heresy, Books III. to VIII. of the "Confessions" contain the record. Upon his conversion he became a most stout and valued champion of the Catholic Faith, and had the happiness of seeing the Donatist sect almost entirely reabsorbed within the Church, and the Pelagian heresy utterly discredited.

The "Confessions" of S. Augustine are exceedingly interesting in the picture they present to us of the Church in the fourth century, surrounded with paganism and heresy; in conflict with both, as also with the moral degradation which marks the decay of the Roman Empire. Clearly manifest is the fact that "She was indeed the Salt of the earth," which but for her must have continued to wallow in corruption. The life which she at that time demanded of her "Faithful" members was strict, severe, and ascetic; and to the calm contentment of such a life were drawn those who were wearied with the turmoil and restless activity which belonged to the secular life, with the pleasures and pursuits of that day. It may possibly have been in danger of becoming not only "not of the world," but almost "not in the world." Verecundus, for example, long delays his conversion, because he was a married man, and the ascetic celibate life of the Church, which thus was rendered impossible for him, was what most attracted him; and if he could not be a Christian of that type, he would not, he thought, become a Christian at all. The fruit of this teaching and practice, in souls such as that of S. Augustine, was an entire renunciation of the joys of the world, and a complete absorption in the religious life.

The temperament of the Saint was ardent, affectionate, and excitable. Whether in early youth he is led by desire of his companions' praise to rob a neighbour's orchard, or records the desolation of soul caused by the death of a friend, whether later he dwells on the characters of Alypius and Nebridius, or that of Adeodatus, the son of his sin, or whether it is his converse with Monica his mother, and her loving and tender care of him, or his sorrow for her death, that is his theme, he reveals himself as a loving-hearted man, to whom

friendship and fellowship were absolutely essential, and one in whom was no trace of paltry personal feeling. The style of the "Confessions" bears many traces of his training in rhetoric. It is often epigrammatic, and in a stately and untranslatable way he plays on the sound of words, and balances them with extraordinary care. His familiarity with and common use of Scripture is remarkable. His mind was thoroughly steeped in it, and its phrases had become so much a part of his vocabulary that they are of constant recurrence in his writings. The piety of his purpose, which does not shrink from unveiling the darkest recesses of his soul, cannot save the book in parts from being terrible. The long struggle between his higher spiritual impulses and his lower carnal habits; the way in which his moral character and conduct act and react upon his mental clearness of vision, and his state of religious doubt; these things are set forth in a manner which cannot fail to awaken deep interest, and to manifest the intimate connection between moral habit and right faith. To the Agnostic of the nineteenth century the "Confessions of S. Augustine" are a warning; while the complete satisfaction and rest which his keen and cultured intellect, after at the prompting of his lower nature it had subtly sought many respites from a faith which demanded a purer life than he was prepared to live, found at length in the Creed of the "Catholic Mother," may suffice to convince that the Religion of Christ has in it depths which can afford to the most logical and scientific minds a peace which will elsewhere be sought in vain.

The translation is revised, and the issue of this edition is made in the hope that the self-humiliation of S. Augustine, in so baring his inmost soul to the criticism of a gainsaying

world, may under God still bring forth its fruits in the conversion of many, and the establishment of more in that true life of Catholic Faith, sacramental in its origin, in its course, and in its close, which he describes as being the life of his mother Monica, and in which after his conversion he lived most holily until his death in the year 430.

EDITOR.





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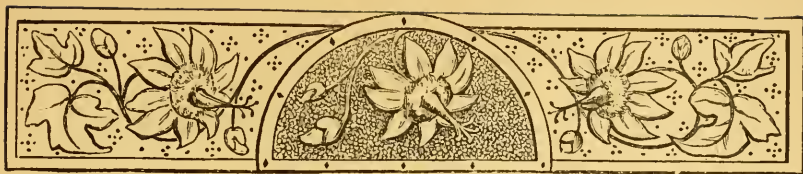
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THE  
CONFESSIONS OF S. AUGUSTINE,  
BISHOP OF HIPPO.

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Book 3.

AFTER AN INVOCATION OF GOD, AUGUSTINE DECLARES THE BEGINNINGS OF HIS LIFE ; HIS INFANCY AND BOYHOOD UP TO HIS FIFTEENTH YEAR. HE CONFESSES THAT AT THIS AGE HE WAS MORE FOND OF CHILDISH AMUSEMENTS AND FOLLIES THAN OF LEARNING.

CHAPTER I.

*He declares the greatness of God : and by Him aroused desires to seek and call upon Him.*

“ GREAT art Thou, O Lord, and greatly to be praised ” (Ps. cxlv. 3) ; “ great is Thy power, and Thy wisdom is infinite ” (Ps. cxlvii. 5). And Thee would man praise, though but a fragment of Thy creation ; man, that bears about him his mortality, that bears about him the witness of his sin, even the witness, that “ Thou resistest the proud ” (1 S. Pet. v. 5) ; yet would man praise Thee though but a fragment of Thy creation. Thou dost arouse us to delight in praising Thee ; for Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our heart is restless, until it find rest in Thee. Grant me, Lord, to know and understand whether to call on Thee be the first thing, or to praise Thee ? and again, whether to know Thee or to call on Thee ? for who can call on Thee, that knoweth not Thee ? for he that knoweth not

Thee may call on Thee as other than Thou art. Or, is it rather, that we call on Thee that we may know Thee? but “how shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? or how shall they believe without a preacher?” (Rom. x. 14); and “they shall praise the Lord that seek Him” (Ps. xxii 26); for “they that seek shall find Him” (S. Matt. vii. 7); and they that find shall praise Him. Calling upon Thee, Lord, will I seek Thee; and believing in Thee will I call upon Thee; for to us hast Thou been preached. My faith, Lord, calls on Thee, which Thou hast given me, wherewith Thou hast inspired me, through the Incarnation of Thy Son, through the ministry of the Preacher [*i. e.*, S. Ambrose, Bp. of Milan.—ED.].

## CHAPTER II.

*That God, upon whom we call, is in us, and we in Him.*

AND how shall I call upon God, my God and Lord? For when I shall call for Him, I shall be calling Him to myself! and what room is there within me, whither my God may come to me? whither may God come to me, God who made heaven and earth? is there, indeed, O Lord my God, aught in me that can contain Thee? do even heaven and earth, which Thou hast made, and wherein Thou hast made me, contain Thee? or, since without Thee, not anything that is, could be, does it follow that anything that is doth contain Thee? Since, then, I too am of such a nature, why do I crave that Thou shouldest come to me, who were not, wert Thou not in me? For not yet am I gone down to hell, and yet Thou art there also. For “if I go down into hell, Thou art there also” (Ps. cxxxix. 7). I could not then be, O my God, I could not be at all, wert Thou not in me; or is it not rather that I could not be unless I were in Thee, “of whom are all things, by whom are all things, in whom are all things”? (Rom. xi. 36.) Even so, Lord, even so. Whither do I call Thee, since I am in Thee? or whence canst Thou come to me? for whither can I go away beyond heaven and earth, that thence my God should come to me, who hath said, “I fill heaven and earth” (Jer. xxiii. 24).



## CHAPTER III.

*God wholly filleth all things : but Him, nor Heaven, nor Earth containeth.*

DO heaven and earth then contain Thee, since Thou fillest them? or dost Thou fill them and yet more of Thee remaineth, since they do not contain Thee? or whether pourest Thou forth what remaineth of Thyself when the heaven and the earth are full? or hast Thou no need that Thou by aught shouldest be contained, since Thou containest all things, for what Thou dost fill by containing Thou dost fill? for the vessels which are full of Thee uphold Thee not, since, though they were broken, Thou wert not poured out. And when Thou art "poured out upon us" (Joel ii. 28), Thou art not Thyself cast down, but Thou upliftest us; neither art Thou scattered, but Thou gatherest us. But Thou who fillest all things, fillest Thou them with Thy whole self? or, since all things cannot contain Thee wholly, do they contain a part of Thee? and all at once the same part? or does each contain its own part, the greater more, the smaller less? And is, then, one part of Thee greater, another less? or art Thou wholly everywhere, though naught contains Thee wholly?

## CHAPTER IV.

*The Majesty of God is supreme : and His perfections cannot be expressed.*

WHAT art Thou then, my God? what, I ask, but the Lord God? "For who is Lord but the Lord? or who is God except our God?" (Ps. xviii. 31, Vulg.). O Thou Most highest, most good, most potent, most omnipotent; most merciful, yet most just; most hidden, yet most present; fairest, yet most strong; firm fixed, yet incomprehensible; who changest not, yet changest all things; never new, never old; yet who makest all things new, and "bringest age upon the proud, and they know it not;" ever working, ever at rest; that gatherest, yet lackest nothing; that bearest, and fillest, and coverest; that createst, and nourishest, and makest perfect; that seekest, and yet possessest all things. Thou dost love without

passion ; Thou art jealous, without anxiety ; Thou repentest without grief ; Thou art angry without disquiet ; Thou changest Thy works, without changing Thy purpose ; Thou receivest again what Thou dost find, yet didst never lose ; never in need, yet Thou rejoicest in gains ; never covetous, yet Thou demandest usury. Thou receivest over and above, that Thou mayest owe ; and who hath aught that is not Thine ? Thou payest debts, that owest none ; Thou forgivest debts, yet lovest nothing. And what have I yet said, my God, my life, my holy joy ? or what saith any when he speaks of Thee ? Yet woe to them that speak not of Thee, since they that speak most are even as the dumb.

## CHAPTER V.

*He seeketh rest in God, and forgiveness of his sins.*

OH ! that I might find rest in Thee ! Oh ! that Thou wouldest enter into my heart, and saturate it, that I may forget my own ills, and embrace Thee, my only good ! What art Thou to me ? In Thy pity, teach me to utter it. Or what am I to Thee that Thou demandest love from me, and, if I comply not, art wroth with me, and dost menace me with grievous woes ? Is it then but a slight woe to love Thee not ? Ah me ! by Thy compassions tell me, O Lord my God, what Thou art to me. " Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation " (Ps. xxxv. 3). So say it, that I may hear. Behold, Lord, the ears of my heart are before Thee ; open Thou them and " say unto my soul, I am thy salvation." After this word let me hasten and lay hold on Thee. Hide not Thy face from me. Let me die (that I die not) that I may see Thy face.

Narrow is the dwelling-place within my soul ; enlarge Thou it, that Thou mayest enter in. It is ruinous ; do Thou repair it. It has that within which must offend Thine eyes ; I confess and know it. But who shall cleanse it ? or to whom should I cry, save Thee ? " Lord, cleanse me from my secret faults ; keep Thy servant also from presumptuous sins " (Ps. xix. 12, 13). " I believe, and therefore do I speak " (Ps. cxvi. 10). Lord, Thou knowest. " Have I not confessed my sins unto the Lord : and so

Thou hast forgiven the wickedness of my sin" (Ps. xxxii. 6). "I contend not in judgment with Thee" (Job ix. 2), who art the truth; I seek not to deceive myself; "lest mine iniquity lie unto itself" (Ps. xxvi. 12, Vulg.). Therefore I contend not in judgment with Thee; "for if Thou, Lord, art extreme to mark what is done amiss, O Lord, who may abide it" (Ps. cxxx. 3).

## CHAPTER VI.

*He describes his infancy; and extols the protecting care and eternal providence of God.*

**Y**ET let me speak unto Thy mercy, me, "dust and ashes." Yea, let me speak, since to Thy mercy I speak, and not to scornful man. Thou too, perhaps, despisest me, yet wilt Thou "return and have compassion" (Jer. xii. 15) upon me. For what would I say, O Lord my God, but that I know not whence I came hither; into this dying life (shall I call it?) or living death. Then immediately did the consolations of Thy mercies take me up as I have heard from the parents of my flesh, out of whose substance Thou didst sometime fashion me; for in truth I remember it not. Thus there awaited me the comforts of woman's milk. For neither my mother nor my nurses stored their own breasts; but Thou didst bestow on me the food of infancy through them, according to Thine ordinance, and to the riches distributed even through the first springs of things. Thou also gavest me to desire no more than Thou gavest; and to my nurses willingly to give me what Thou gavest them. For they with an affection ordained by Thee willingly gave me, what they abounded with from Thee. For good for them was my good from them, which, indeed, was not from them but through them; for from Thee, O God, are all good things, and "from my God is all my salvation" (2 Sam. xxiii. 5). For this I since have learned, that Thou dost call to me by these gifts, which within me and without me Thou dost give. For then I knew but to suck; to rest in the delights, but to weep at the vexations of my flesh; nothing more.

Afterwards I began to smile; first in sleep, then waking: for so it was told me of myself, and I believed it; for we

see the like in other infants, though of myself I remember it not. Thus, little by little, I became conscious where I was; and to have a wish to express my desires to those who could gratify them, and I could not; for the desires were within me, but they without; nor could they by any sense of theirs enter within my mind. So I used to fling about my limbs and voice, making the few signs I could, and such as I could, to express my desires; though they expressed them poorly enough. And when they were not complied with, whether because they were not understood, or were injurious, then I grew indignant with my elders for not submitting to me, with them free as they were because they were not my slaves, and took my vengeance on them with tears. Such have I learned infants to be from observing them; and, that I was myself such, they who knew it not, have shown me better than my nurses who knew it.

And, lo! my infancy is dead long since, and I live. But Thou, Lord, who for ever livest, and in whom nothing dies: for before the beginnings of the ages, and before all that can be called "before," Thou art, and art God and Lord of all which Thou hast created; and with Thee abide, the first causes of all things unabiding; and of all changeful things, the changeless springs abide with Thee: and in Thee live the eternal reasons of all things unreasoning and temporal. Say, to me, Thy suppliant, O God; Thou all merciful to me all miserable, say to me; did my infancy succeed another age of mine already dead? was it that which I passed within my mother's womb? for of that I have heard somewhat, and have myself seen woman with child? and what, O God my joy, was I before that? Was I any where or any body? For have I none to tell me this, neither father nor mother, nor experience of others, nor mine own memory. Dost Thou mock me for asking this, and bid me praise Thee and confess Thee, for that which I do know?

I acknowledge Thee, Lord of heaven and earth, and praise Thee for my first beginnings of life, and for my infancy, whereof I remember nothing; for Thou hast appointed that man should form conjectures as to himself from the things of others; and even believe much on the authority of mere women. Even then I had being and life, and towards the close of my infancy I began to seek

for signs, whereby to make known my feelings to others. Whence could such a living thing be, save from Thee, Lord? Shall any be artificer to fashion himself? or can there elsewhere be derived any vein, through which being and life may flow into us, except that "Thou makest us," O Lord; and "to be" and "to live" are all one to Thee: since Thou Thyself art supremely Being, and supremely Life. "For Thou art most high, and Thou changest not" (Mal. iii. 6), neither in Thee doth to-day come to a close; yet in Thee doth it come to a close; because all such things also are in Thee. For they had no way to pass away, unless Thou didst sustain them. And since "Thy years fail not" (Ps. cii. 27), Thy years are one to-day. How many of ours and our fathers' days have passed away through Thy "to-day," and from it received the measures and the manner of their existence; and others still shall pass away, and so receive the degree of their being. But "Thou art the same" (Ps. cii. 27), and all things of to-morrow, and beyond it, and all of yesterday, and before it, to-day shalt Thou do, to-day hast Thou done. What is it to me, though any comprehend not this? Let him too rejoice and say, "What thing is this" (Ex. xvi. 15). Let him too rejoice thus; that he may choose rather by not finding them to find Thee, than by finding them not to find Thee.

## CHAPTER VII.

*He proves that even Infancy is prone to sin.*

HEAR, O God. Alas, for man's sins! So saith man, and Thou hast pity on him; since Thou hast made him, but madest not the sin in him. Who remindeth me of the sin of my infancy? for in Thy sight none is "clean from sin," not even the infant whose life on earth is but a day. Who remindeth me? doth not each little infant, in whom I see what I remember not about myself? But in what did I then sin? was it that wailing I longed for the breast? for should I now so long, not for the breast, but for food convenient for my age, most justly should I be laughed at and blamed. What I then did was deserving of blame;



but since I could not understand any who might blame, neither custom nor reason allowed me to be blamed. For with our growth we uproot and cast away such habits. Now no man when he prunes knowingly casts away what is good. Or was it then good, even for a while, to cry for what, if given, would hurt? bitterly to resent, that persons free, and its own elders, yea even its parents, served it not? that many besides, wiser than it, obeyed not the nod of its pleasure? to strive to strike and hurt with all its might, because its biddings were not obeyed, which had been obeyed to its peril? In the weakness then of baby limbs, not in its will, lies its innocence. Myself have seen and known jealousy even in a babe; it could not yet speak, but pale, and with bitter expression it would eye its foster-brother. Who knows not this? Mothers and nurses tell you, that they abate these things by I know not what remedies. Perhaps that too is innocence, when the fountain of milk is flowing in generous abundance, not to endure any to share it, though in extremest need, and whose very life as yet depends thereon. We bear gently with all this, not as being no or slight evils, but because they will disappear by lapse of time. For though you now excuse them, the very same tempers are utterly intolerable when found in persons of maturer age.

Thou, then, O Lord my God, who gavest life to this my infancy, and a body, which thus as we see Thou hast furnished with senses, compacted with limbs, made shapely in form, and, for its general good and safety, hast implanted in it all the powers of life, Thou commandest me to praise Thee in these things, to confess unto Thee, and "to sing praises to Thy name, O most Highest" (Ps. xcii. 1). For Thou art God, Almighty and Good, even hadst Thou done only this, which none could do but Thou alone, from Whom is the mode of being of all things; who out of Thy own fairness makest all things fair; and orderest all things by Thy law. This age then, Lord, whereof I have no remembrance, which I take on others' word, and guess from other infants that I have passed, true though that guess be, I am yet loth to count in this life of mine which I live in this world. For in that it reaches back to the shadows of forgetfulness, it is like to that which I spent in my mother's womb. But if "I was shapen in wickedness, and in sin did

my mother conceive me" (Ps. li. 7), where, I beseech Thee, O my God, where, Lord, or when, was I Thy servant guiltless? But, lo! that period I pass by; and what have I now to do with that, of which I can recal no vestiges?

## CHAPTER VIII.

*That a child learneth not to speak by rules, but from the gesture and words of his parents.*

PASSING hence from infancy, I came to boyhood, or rather it came to me, displacing infancy. Nor did that depart,—(for whither went it?)—and yet it was no more. For I was no longer a speechless infant, but a speaking boy. This I remember; and have since observed how I learned to speak. For my elders did not teach me words (as, soon after, other learning) by any set method; but I, longing by cries and broken accents and various motions of my limbs to express my thoughts, that so my will might be obeyed, and yet unable to express all I willed, or to whom I willed, did myself, by the understanding which Thou, my God, gavest me, go through the sounds in my memory. When they named anything, and to suit the word turned towards it, I saw and remembered that they called what they desired to point out by the name they uttered. And that they meant this thing and no other, was plain from the motion of their body, the natural language, as it were, of all people, expressed by the countenance, the glance of the eyes, the movement of the limbs, and the tone of the voice, indicating the affections of the mind, as it pursues, possesses, rejects, or shuns. And thus by frequently hearing words, as they occurred in various sentences, I collected gradually for what they were the symbols; and having broken in my mouth to these symbols, I thereby gave utterance to my will. Thus I exchanged with those about me these symbols of our wills in utterance, and so launched deeper into the stormy fellowship of human life, yet depending on parental authority and the beck of elders.

## CHAPTER IX.

*Concerning the hatred of lessons, the love of play, and the fear of being whipped, noticeable in boys ; and concerning the inconsistencies of their elders and masters.*

O GOD my God, what miseries and derision did I now experience, when obedience to my teachers was imposed upon me, as proper in a boy, in order that in this world I might get on and excel in oratorical arts, which should serve to the "praise of men," and to deceitful riches. Next I was put to school to learn lessons, in which I (poor wretch) knew not what use there was ; and yet, if idle in learning, I was flogged. For this method was commended by our forefathers ; and many, passing the same course before us, framed for us weary paths, through which we were compelled to pass ; multiplying toil and grief upon the sons of Adam. But, Lord, we found men that called upon Thee, and we learnt from them to think of Thee as well as we could, as of some great One, who, though hidden from our senses, couldst hear and help us. For, as a boy, I began to pray to Thee, my aid and refuge ; and broke the fetters of my tongue to call on Thee, and I used to ask Thee, though small, yet with no small earnestness, that I might not be flogged at school. And when "Thou didst not hear me, though not to my folly" (Ps. xxii. 2, Vulg.), my elders, yea, my very parents, who yet wished me no ill, laughed at my stripes, my then great and grievous ill.

Is there, Lord, any of courage so great, and cleaving to Thee with so intense affection (for a sort of doggedness will in a way do it) ; is there any one, I ask, who, from cleaving devoutly to Thee, is endued with so great a courage, that he can think as lightly of the racks and hooks and other tortures (to be delivered from which, throughout all lands, men call on Thee with extreme dread), laughing at those by whom they are feared most bitterly, as our parents used to laugh at the tortures which we suffered as boys from our masters ? For we feared them no less ; nor prayed we less to Thee to escape them. And yet we used to sin by not writing or reading or minding our lessons as was demanded of us. For we wanted not, O Lord, for memory or capacity, whereof Thy will gave enough for our age ; but our



sole delight was play ; and for this we were punished by those who yet themselves were doing the like. But the trifling occupations of older people are called “business ;” but those of boys, being really the same, are punished by those elders ; and none commiserates either boys or men. For will any of sound judgment approve of my being beaten as a boy, because, by playing at ball, I made less progress in studies, which I was to learn, only that, as a man, I might play more odiously ? and what else did he, who flogged me ? who, if worsted in some trifling discussion with his fellow-tutor, was more embittered and jealous than I, when beaten at ball by a play-fellow ?

## CHAPTER X.

*From love of sports and shows he neglects his studies, and the precepts of his parents.*

AND yet, I sinned herein, O Lord God, the Creator and Disposer of all things in nature, of sin the Disposer only, O Lord my God, I sinned in acting contrary to the commands of my parents and of those masters. For what they, with whatever motive, would have me learn, I might afterward have put to good use : For I disobeyed, not from the choice of better things, but from love of play, loving the pride of victory in my contests, and to have my ears tickled with lying fables, that they might itch the more ; the same curiosity shone in my eyes more and more, at the shows and games of my elders. Yet those who give these shows are in such esteem, that almost all wish the same for their children, and yet willingly allow them to be whipped, if by those very games they are hindered from the studies, whereby they would have them attain to be the givers of them. Look with pity, Lord, on these things, and deliver us who call upon Thee now ; deliver those too who call not on Thee yet, that they may call on Thee, and Thou mayest deliver them.

## CHAPTER XI.

*He is taken ill, and desires to be baptized ; but his mother defers it upon his recovery, as his father is not yet a Christian.*

AS a boy, then, I had already heard of an eternal life, promised us through the humility of the Lord our God stooping to our pride ; and even from my mother's womb, whose hope was in Thee, I was signed with the sign of His cross and salted with His salt. Thou sawest, Lord, how while yet a boy, I was one day suddenly seized with oppression of the stomach, and like to die ; Thou sawest, my God (for Thou wert my keeper), with what emotion and what faith I entreated, from the affection of my mother and Thy Church, the mother of us all, the baptism of Thy Christ my God and Lord. Whereupon the mother of my flesh, being much disturbed (since with a heart pure in Thy faith, she even more lovingly "travailed in birth" of my salvation), would with all speed have provided for my consecration and cleansing by the health-giving sacraments, confessing Thee, Lord Jesus, for the remission of sins, unless I had suddenly recovered. And so, as if I must needs be again polluted should I live, my cleansing was deferred, because after that washing the guilt, in gross sins, would be greater and more perilous. I then already believed : and my mother and the whole household, except my father : yet did not he prevail over the power of my mother's piety in me, that I should believe in Christ the less, because he did not yet believe. For it was her steadfast aim, that Thou my God, rather than he, shouldest be my father ; and in this Thou didst aid her to prevail over her husband, whom she the better obeyed ; and even thus she obeyed Thee who hast so commanded.

I beseech Thee, my God, I would fain know, if so Thou willest, for what purpose was I hindered from being then baptised ? was it for my good that the rein was laid loose, as it were, upon me, for me to sin ? or was it not laid loose ? If not, why does it still echo in our ears on all sides, "Let him alone, let him do as he will, for he is not yet baptized ?" And yet as to bodily health, we do not say, "Let him be worse wounded, for he is not yet healed." How much better then, had I been at once healed ; and that then it

had been brought about by my friends' diligence and my own, that my soul's recovered health had been kept safe in Thy safe keeping, who hadst given it. Better truly. But how many and great waves of temptation seemed to hang over me after my boyhood! These my mother foresaw; and preferred to hazard on them the clay whence I might afterwards be moulded, than the very image, when made.

## CHAPTER XII.

*He was compelled to labour at his studies; and confesses in this that God is good.*

IN boyhood itself, however (so much less dreaded for me than youth), I loved not lessons, and hated to be forced to them. Yet I was forced; and this was well done towards me, but I did not well; for, unless compelled, I would not have learnt. But no one doth well what he doth unwillingly, even though what he doth, be well. Yet neither did they well who forced me, but what was well was done of Thee, my God. For they did not care to what use I might put what they compelled me to learn, except to satiate the insatiate desires of a want that hath abundance, and a glory that is full of shame. (See Rev. iii. 17, and Phil. iii. 19.) But Thou, "by whom the very hairs of our head are all numbered" (S. Matt. x. 30), didst use for my good the error of all who urged me to learn; and my own who would not learn, Thou didst use for my punishment—a punishment of which I was not undeserving, being so small a boy, yet so great a sinner. So by those who did not well, Thou didst well for me; and by my own sin Thou didst justly requite me. For Thou hast commanded, and so it is, that every inordinate affection should be its own punishment.

## CHAPTER XIII.

*He used to hate the Greek grammar and language; but delighted in his Latin, and the empty tales of the poets.*

BUT why did I so much hate the Greek, which as a little boy I used to study? not even yet is it quite clear to me. For the Latin I loved; not what my first

masters, but what the so-called grammarians taught me. For those first lessons, reading, writing, and arithmetic, I used to find no less burdensome and tasklike than all my Greek. And yet whence was this too, but from the sin and vanity of this life, because "I was but flesh, and a wind that passeth away and cometh not again"? (Ps. lxxviii. 39). For those first lessons were in fact better, because more certain; by them I obtained, and still retain, the power of reading what I find written, and myself writing what I will; whereas in the others, I was compelled to learn the wanderings of some Æneas or other, forgetful of my own and to weep for dead Dido, because she killed herself for love; the while, with dry eyes, I, most miserable, endured myself dying among these things, far from Thee, O God my life.

For what could be more miserable than a miserable being, who commiserates not himself, weeping the death of Dido which came of her love to Æneas, but weeping not his own death which came of want of love to Thee, O God, Thou light of my heart, Thou bread of my inmost soul, Thou Power who makest fertile my mind, and the thought of my bosom? I loved Thee not, I committed fornication against Thee, and all around me thus fornicating there echoed "Well done! well done!" "for the friendship of this world is fornication against Thee" (S. James iv. 4), and "Well done! well done!" is repeated till one is ashamed not to be thus a man. And all this I wept not, but I wept for Dido slain, and "seeking by the sword a wound extreme," myself seeking the while the extremest and lowest of Thy creatures, having forsaken Thee, earth passing into the earth; and if forbid to read all this, I would grieve that I might not read what grieved me. Madness like this is reckoned a more honourable and a richer learning than that by which I learned to read and write.

But now, my God, cry Thou aloud in my soul; and let Thy truth tell me, "Not so, not so. Far better was that earlier lore." For, lo, I would far more readily forget the wanderings of Æneas and all the rest than how to read and write. But over the thresholds of the Grammar Schools veils are hung; but these indicate not so much the dignity of secrecy as the cloak of errors. Let not those, whom I no longer fear, cry out against me, while I confess to Thee, my God, whatever my soul will, and acquiesce in the

condemnation of my evil ways, that I may love Thy good ways. Let not either buyers or sellers of grammar cry out against me. For if I put the question to them whether it be true that Æneas came on a time to Carthage, as the Poet tells, the less learned will reply that they know not, the more learned that he never did. But if I were to ask with what letters the name "Æneas" is written, all who have learnt this will answer me aright, according to the use and wont, by which men have established those signs among themselves. If, again, I should ask, which might be forgotten with least detriment to the concerns of life, reading and writing or these poetic fictions, who does not foresee, what all must answer who have not wholly forgotten themselves? I sinned, then, when as a boy I preferred those empty to those more profitable studies, or rather hated the one and loved the other. "One and one, two;" "two and two, four;" this was to me a hateful singsong: "the wooden horse filled with armed men," and "the burning of Troy," and "Creusa's shade" were the vain spectacle most charming to me.

## CHAPTER XIV.

*Why he disliked Greek, and easily learned Latin.*

WHY then did I hate the Greek language in which like songs are sung. For Homer also was skilful in weaving the like fables, and is most sweetly-vain, yet was he bitter to my boyish taste. And so I suppose would Virgil be to Grecian children, when forced to learn him as I was the other. Difficulty, in truth, the difficulty of learning a foreign tongue, sprinkled, as it were, with gall all the sweetness of Grecian fables. For I knew none of the words, and to make me know them, I was urged vehemently with cruel threats and punishments. Time was also (as an infant) I knew no Latin; but this I learned without fear or torture, by mere observation, amid the caresses of my nurses, the jests of smiling friends, and the delights of those that played with me. This I learned without any burden of punishment to urge me on, for my heart urged me to give birth to its conceptions, which I could only do by learning words not of teachers, but of talkers; in whose ears also I gave birth



to the thoughts, whatever I conceived. It is quite clear then, that a free curiosity has more power to make us learn these things than a terrifying obligation. Only this obligation restrains the waverings of that freedom by Thy laws, O my God, Thy laws, from the master's rod to the martyr's trials, for Thy laws have the effect of mingling for us certain wholesome bitters, which recall us to Thee away from that pernicious blithesomeness, by means of which we depart from Thee.

## CHAPTER XV.

*He prays that he may use in God's service what he learned as a boy.*

HEAR, Lord, my prayer ; let not my soul faint under Thy discipline, nor let me faint in confessing unto Thee Thy mercies, whereby Thou hast drawn me out of all my most evil ways ; that Thou mightest become sweeter to me than all the allurements which I once pursued ; that I may most entirely love Thee, and clasp Thy hand with all the affections of my heart, and Thou mayest yet draw me away from every temptation, even unto the end. For, lo, do Thou, O Lord, my King and my God, make serviceable to Thyself whatever useful thing I learned in boyhood ; for Thy service be it, that I speak, and write, and read, and reckon. For Thou didst grant me Thy discipline, while I was learning vanities ; and the sin of taking delight in those vanities Thou hast forgiven. In them, indeed, I learned many useful words, but these may as well be learned in things not vain ; and that is the safe path, in which the young should walk.

## CHAPTER XVI.

*He blames the method in which the young are taught ; and shows why the poets attribute vices to the gods.*

BUT woe to thee, thou torrent of human custom ! Who shall stand against thee ? how long shalt thou not be dried up ? how long roll the sons of Eve into that huge and dreadful sea, which even they scarcely overpass who

embark upon the wood? \* Did not I read in thee of Jove the thunderer and the adulterer? both, certainly, he could not be; but so was it devised, that the sham thunder might authorise and pander to real adultery. And now which of our gowned masters, lends a sober ear to one of the same clay as themselves, who cries out, "These things Homer feigned, and transferred things human to the gods; would he had brought down things divine to us!" (Cic. Tusc. i. 26.) Yet more truly had he said, "These are indeed but fictions; but by attributing a divine nature to wicked men, crimes were no longer deemed crimes, so that those who commit them might seem to imitate not abandoned men, but the celestial gods."

And yet, thou hellish torrent, into thee are cast the sons of men with rich payments for such learning; and a great business is made of it, when this is being publicly done in the forum, within sight of laws appointing a salary beside the scholar's payments; and thou lashest thy rocks and roarest, "Hence words are learnt; hence eloquence is acquired; most necessary to gain your ends, or set forth your opinions." As if we should have never known such words as "golden shower," "lap," "deceit," "temples of the heavens," or others in that passage, unless Terence had brought a lewd youth upon the stage, setting up Jupiter as his example of debauchery, while he views a "certain picture painted on the wall, where this was shown, how Jove, they say, once dropped in Danae's lap a golden shower, and on the woman passed deceit." And then mark how he excites himself to lust as by celestial authority; "But what God? saith he. Why, he that shakes the topmost temples of the heavens with his thunder. And may not I, weak man, the same thing do? Eh, but that I did, and merrily." (Terence, Eun. Act iii. sc. 5.) Not one whit more easily are the words learnt for all this vileness; but by their means the vileness is committed the more boldly. Not that I blame the words, being, as it were, vessels elect and

\* The wood of the cross is probably what S. Augustine here intends. Compare Wisdom xiv. 5, "Therefore do men commit their lives to a small piece of wood, and passing the rough sea in a weak vessel are saved." Of this passage S. Rabanus Maurus writes, "What sea, save the tempestuous ocean of this naughty world? what vessel, save the the holier ark, the Cross of the Lord Jesus?"—EDITOR.



precious ; but that wine of error which is in them, was given to us to drink by teachers intoxicated with it ; and if we, too, drank not, we were beaten, nor could we appeal to any sober judge. Yet, O my God (in whose presence my remembrance of this is now harmless), all this unhappily I learnt willingly and took delight in it, and for this was pronounced a hopeful boy.

## CHAPTER XVII.

*He continues the subject of the last chapter.*

SUFFER me, my God, to say somewhat of my talents, Thy gift, and on what absurdities I wasted them. For a task was set me, troublesome enough to my soul, upon terms of praise or shame, and fear of stripes, to speak the words of Juno, as she raged and mourned that she could not turn the Trojan king from Italy. Which words I had heard that Juno never uttered ; but we were forced to err and stray in the footsteps of these poetic fictions, and to say in prose much that the poet had expressed in verse. And he would speak with the more applause, who best maintained the dignity of the character he personated, and simulated the passion of rage and grief, and meetly clothed the thoughts in words. What is it to me, O my true life, my God, that my declamation was applauded above so many of my own age and class ? is not all this smoke and wind ? and was there nothing else whereon to exercise my talents and my tongue ? Thy praises, Lord, Thy praises throughout Thy Scriptures, might have lent support to the vine of my heart ; so had it not trailed away amid these trifling vanities, a vile prey for the fowls of the air. For in more ways than one do men sacrifice to the rebel angels.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

*Men keep with care the rules of grammar ; but neglect the eternal laws of lasting salvation.*

BUT what marvel that I was thus carried away to vanities, and went out from Thy presence, O my God, when men were set before me for imitation, who, if in

relating some action of theirs, in itself not ill, expressed themselves with some barbarism or solecism, being censured, were abashed ; but if they related their own immoralities in words well chosen and aptly put together, with fluency and eloquence, being praised, they gloried ? These things Thou seest, Lord, and holdest Thy peace ; “ long-suffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth ” (Ps. lxxxvi. 15). Wilt Thou for ever hold Thy peace ? and even now thou dost pluck out of this most frightful gulf the soul that seeketh Thee, that thirsteth for Thy pleasures, “ whose heart saith unto Thee, I have sought Thy face ; Thy face, Lord, will I seek ” (Ps. xxvii. 8). For in “ darkened affections I was far off from Thee ” (See Rom. i. 21). For it is not by our feet, or by local distances, that men leave Thee, or return unto Thee. Or did that Thy younger son look out for horses or chariots, or ships, fly with visible wings, or with knees bent to walk, take his journey, that he might in a far country waste in riotous living all Thou gavest at his faring forth ? a loving Father, when Thou gavest, and more loving unto him when he returned empty. So then lustful affections are in truth darkened ; and they are the “ country ” far from Thy face.

Behold, O Lord God, yea, behold patiently as Thou art wont, how carefully the sons of men observe the conventional rules of letters and syllables received from former speakers, neglecting the eternal covenant of everlasting salvation received from Thee ; insomuch, that any who should hold to, or teach, the obsolete opinions of pronunciation and contrary to grammatical rule, should fail to aspirate the “ h ” in “ uman being,” would give more offence to human beings, than if he, a human being, were to hold human beings in hatred, contrary to Thy precepts. As if, forsooth, one could receive more hurt from any human enemy, than the hatred’s self with which he is incensed against him ; or could wound more deeply him whom he persecutes, than he wounds his own soul by his enmity. Assuredly no science of letters is so implanted in us, as the law of conscience, “ Do not to another as you would not be done by.” How Thou dost hide Thyself, O God, Thou only great, “ that dwellest on high ” (Isaiah xxxiii. 5) in silence, and by an unwearied law dost for punishment send blindness upon lawless desires. In quest of the fame of eloquence, a man standing before a human

judge, surrounded by a human crowd, inveighing against his enemy with fiercest hatred, will take heed most watchfully, lest, by a slip of the tongue, he should say "amun' men;"\* but will take no heed, lest, through the fury of his spirit, he should take away his life from among men.

## CHAPTER XIX.

*He proves that infants are not without faults; and details the guile and faults of boyhood.*

SUCH were the moral surroundings among which I lay, unhappy, in boyhood; such the school of my contest, in which I had feared more to commit a barbarism, than, having committed one, to envy those who had not. These things I speak and confess to Thee, my God; for which I had praise from them, in whose pleasure I then thought honourable life to consist. For I saw not the abyss of villainess, wherein "I was cast away from Thine eyes" (Ps. xxxi. 22). For in them what could be more foul than I already was, since I was offensive even to such as myself? with innumerable lies deceiving my tutor, my masters, my parents, from love of play, eagerness to see vain shows and restlessness to imitate stage plays? Thefts also I committed from my parents' cellar and table, either because tempted by gluttony, or that I might have to give to boys, who sold me their play, which all the while they delighted in as much as I did. In this play, too, I often sought to win by cheating; won over myself meanwhile by coveting to excel. And what could I so ill put up with, or, when I found it out, did I denounce so fiercely, as that very thing which I was doing to others, and for which, found out, I was denounced, but yet chose rather to quarrel than to yield. And is this the innocence of boyhood? Not so, Lord, not so; I cry Thy mercy, O my God. For these very sins, as ripper years succeed, these very sins are transferred from tutors and masters, from nuts and balls and sparrows, to

\* There is a constant word play throughout this chapter, most difficult to reproduce. In this sentence the fault, which S. Augustine says a man would eagerly avoid, is that of saying "inter hominibus" instead of "inter homines." I have tried to save the sense.—EDITOR.

magistrates and kings, to gold and manors and slaves, just as severer punishments displace the cane. It was the stature then of childhood, which Thou our King didst commend as an emblem of humility, when Thou saidst, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven" (S. Matt. xix. 14).

## CHAPTER XX.

*He thanks God for benefits conferred on him in boyhood.*

**Y**ET, Lord, to Thee, the Creator and Governor of the universe, most excellent and most good, thanks were due to Thee our God, even hadst Thou willed that boyhood only should be mine. For even then I was, I lived, and felt; and had my preservation; a trace of that most hidden Unity, from which I had my being; I guarded by the inward sense the entireness of my senses, and in these little things, and in my thoughts about little things, I began to take delight in truth. I hated to be deceived, had a vigorous memory, was well furnished with language, was comforted by friendship, avoided pain, shame, and ignorance. In so small a creature, what was not wonderful, not admirable? But all are gifts of my God: it was not I, who gave them to myself; and good these are, and these together are myself. Good, then, is He that made me, and He is my good; and before Him do I exult for every good which even as a boy I had. For herein was my sin, that not in Him, but in His creatures—myself and others—I sought for pleasures, grandeurs, realities, and so fell headlong into sorrows, confusions, errors. Thanks be to Thee, my joy and my glory and my confidence, my God, thanks be to Thee for Thy gifts; but do Thou preserve them to me. For so wilt Thou preserve me, and those things shall be increased and perfected, which Thou hast given me, and I myself shall be with Thee, since even that I am is of Thy gift to me.



## Book 33.

HE PASSES ON TO HIS YOUTH ; BEGINNING FROM HIS SIXTEENTH YEAR ; WHEN HAVING LAID ASIDE HIS STUDIES, HE INDULGED HIS APPETITES, AND WITH HIS COMPANIONS COMMITTED THEFT.

### CHAPTER I.

*He deplores the sins of his youth.*

I DESIRE now to call to mind my past foulness, and the carnal corruptions of my soul ; not because I love them, but that I may love Thee, O my God. For love of Thy love I do it ; recalling my most wicked ways in the bitterness of my remembrance, that Thou mayest grow sweet unto me ; (Thou sweetness never failing, Thou blessed and tranquil sweetness) ; and gathering me again out of that my dissipation, wherein I was torn piecemeal, while turned away from Thy Unity, I lost myself among many things. For I even burnt in my youth heretofore, to be satiated in things below ; and I dared to grow wild with various and shadowy loves : “ my beauty consumed away,” and I was loathly in Thine eyes ; pleasing myself, and desirous to please the eyes of men.

### CHAPTER II.

*In the deepest grief he recalls the sensual indulgences of his sixteenth year.*

AND what was it that I delighted in, but to love, and be beloved ? but the measure of mind to mind, such as is the shining boundary of friendship, was not kept ; but out of the muddy desire of the flesh, and the overflow of youth, mists were given off which clouded and overcast my heart, so that the clear brightness of love could not be distin-



guished from the fog of lust. Both did confusedly-boil in me, and hurried my youthful weakness over the precipice of desire, and sunk me in an abyss of shame. Thy wrath had lowered over me, and I knew it not. I was grown deaf by the clanking of the chain of my mortality, the punishment of the pride of my soul; and I strayed further from Thee, and Thou didst let me alone, and I was tossed about, and poured out, and dissipated, and I boiled over in my fornications, and Thou didst hold Thy peace, O Thou my tardy joy! Thou then didst hold Thy peace, and I wandered further and further from Thee, into more and more barren occasions of sorrows, with a proud dejectedness, and a restless weariness.

Oh! that some one had then restrained my distress, and turned to account the fleeting beauties of these newest powers, had put a bound to their pleasureableness, that so the tides of my youth might have cast themselves upon the shore of marriage if the duty of paternity had not sufficed to calm them, as Thy law prescribes, O Lord: who this way formest the offspring of our mortal race, being able with a gentle hand to blunt the thorns, which were shut out from Thy paradise! For Thy omnipotence is not far from us, even though we are far from Thee. Else ought I more watchfully to have heeded the solemn voice from Thy clouds; "Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh, but I spare you." And "it is good for a man not to touch a woman." And "he that is unmarried thinketh of the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord; but he that is married careth for the things of this world, how he may please his wife" (1 Cor. vii.).

To these words I should have listened more attentively, and being continent "for the kingdom of heaven's sake" (S. Matt. xix. 12), I should the more happily have awaited Thy embraces; but I, poor wretch, as though I had been a boiling sea, followed the tide of my impulses, and forsook Thee, I exceeded all the bounds of Thy laws, yet I escaped not Thy scourges. For what mortal can? For Thou wert ever with me angry in mercy, and besprinkling with most bitter vexations all my unlawful pleasures: that I might seek pleasures free from offence. But where to find such, I could not discover, save in Thee, O Lord, who "shapest our trouble for a precept" (Ps. xciv. 20, Vulg.), and

woundest us, that Thou mayest heal; and killest us, lest we die from Thee. Where was I, and how far was I exiled from the delights of Thy house, in that sixteenth year of the age of my flesh, when the madness of lust which hath license through men's viciousness, though forbidden by Thy laws, took the rule over me, and I resigned myself wholly to it? My friends meanwhile took no care by marriage to save me from ruin; their only care was that I should learn to make a good speech, and be a persuasive orator.

### CHAPTER III.

*Concerning his father, a freedman of Thagaste, the helper of his son's studies; and his mother's counsels to chastity.*

FOR that year were my studies intermitted: whilst after my return from Madaura, a neighbouring city, whither I had begun to travel to study grammar and rhetoric, the expenses for a further journey to Carthage were being found for me rather by the resolution than the means of my father, who was but a poor freedman of Thagaste. To whom tell I this? not to Thee, my God; but before Thee to mine own kind, even to the small portion of mankind, that may light upon these writings of mine. And to what purpose? that I myself and whosoever reads this, may reflect "out of what deep we are to cry unto Thee" (Ps. cxxx. 1). For what is nearer to Thine ears than a heart that makes confession, and a life of faith? Who did not then sing my father's praises, for that beyond the ability of fortune, he would furnish his son with all necessities for a long journey for the sake of his studies? For many citizens far more wealthy did no such thing for their children. But yet this same father had no concern how I grew towards Thee, or how chaste I were; so that I were but a cultured speaker, however barren I were to Thy culture, O God, who art the only true and good Lord of Thy field, my heart.

But while in that my sixteenth year I began to be at home, and to keep enforced holiday from all study, through the narrowness of my parents' fortunes, the briars of unclean desires grew up above my head, and there was no hand to root them out. When that my father saw me at the baths,



now growing toward manhood, and endued with the restlessness of youth, he, as though already exulting in his grandchildren, gladly told it to my mother; intoxicated with that joy wherein the world forgetteth Thee its Creator, and loveth Thy creature instead of Thyself, through that invisible wine of self-will, which is perverse, and inclined to base things. But in my mother's breast Thou hadst already begun Thy temple, and the foundation of Thy holy habitation, whereas my father was as yet a catechumen, and that but recently. She then was startled with an holy fear and trembling; and though I was not as yet one of the faithful, she feared for me those crooked ways, in which they walk, who "turn their back unto Thee and not their face" (Jer. ii. 27).

Woe is me! and dare I say that Thou didst hold Thy peace, O my God, while I was straying further from Thee? Didst Thou then indeed hold Thy peace to me? And whose but Thine were these words which by my mother, Thy faithful one, Thou didst chant in my ears? Nothing whereof sunk into my heart, so as to do it. For she wished, and I remember in private with great earnestness warned me, "to flee fornication, and especially never to sin with another's wife." These seemed to me womanish advices, which I should blush to obey. But they were Thine, and I knew it not; and I thought Thou didst hold Thy peace, and that it was she who spake; by whom Thou didst not hold Thy peace; and in her wast despised by me, her son, "the son of Thy handmaid and Thy servant" (Ps. cxvi. 16). But I knew it not; and ran headlong with such blindness, that amongst my equals I was ashamed of being less vicious, when I heard them boast of their vices, yea, boasting the more the baser they were; and I took pleasure, not only in a vicious act, but in the praise of it. What is worthy of blame but Vice? But I made myself out more vicious than I was to avoid being blamed; and when there was nothing which I could plead guilty of, to be like the most abandoned, I would pretend that I had done what I had not done, that I might not seem more contemptible because I was more innocent; or be held the cheaper because more chaste.

Behold with what companions I walked the streets of Babylon, and wallowed in the mire thereof, as if in a bed

of spices, and precious ointments. And that I might cleave the faster in the midst of it, the invisible enemy trod me down, and seduced me, for that I was easy to be seduced. Neither did the mother of my flesh (who had now “fled out of the midst of Babylon” [Jer. li. 6], yet went more slowly in the skirts thereof), as she advised me to chastity, so heed what she had heard of me from her husband, as to restrain within the bounds of married love (if it could not be pared away to the quick), what she felt to be pestilent at present, and for the future dangerous. She heeded not this, for she feared, lest my prospects might be embarrassed by the clog of a wife. Not that prospect of the world to come, which my mother reposed in Thee ; but the prospect of learning, which both my parents were too desirous I should attain ; my father, because of Thee he thought little or nothing, and of me but vain conceits ; but my mother, because she accounted that those usual courses of learning would not only be no hindrance, but even some help towards attaining Thee in time to come. For thus I conjecture, recalling, as well as I may, the dispositions of my parents. The reins, meantime, were slackened to me, beyond the due measure of severity, so that I might sport, yea, even unto dissoluteness, in all sorts of passions. And in all was a mist shutting out from me, O my God, the brightness of Thy truth ; and mine iniquity “stood out as with fatness” (Ps. lxxiii. 7).

#### CHAPTER IV.

*He joins his companions in an act of theft ; tempted not by want, but by a certain loathing of righteousness.*

THEFT is punished by Thy law, O Lord, and the law written in the hearts of men, which iniquity itself does not blot out. For what thief will abide a thief? not even a rich thief, one driven to steal by want. Yet I wanted to thieve, and did it, though compelled by no want nor poverty, but through a loathing of righteousness and a surfeit of iniquity. For I stole that, of which I had plenty, and much better. Nor did I want to enjoy what I sought by my theft, but the theft and sin itself. A pear tree there was

near our vineyard, laden with fruit, tempting neither in form nor flavour. To shake and rob this, some base young fellows of us went, late one night, after having, according to our abominable habit, kept up our fun in the streets till then ; and took huge loads, not for a feast for ourselves, but to fling to the very hogs, having only tasted them. And this was done by us only for the pleasure of doing what we ought not. Behold my heart, O God, behold my heart, which Thou hadst pity upon in the bottom of the abyss. Now, behold, let my heart tell Thee, what it sought there, that I should be gratuitously wicked, having no temptation to that evil deed, but the evil deed itself. It was foul, and I loved it ; I loved to perish, I loved mine own fault, not that for the sake of which I committed the fault, but my fault itself I loved. Foul soul, falling from Thy firmament to expulsion from thy presence ; not seeking aught through the shame, but the shame itself !

## CHAPTER V.

*That the motive to sin lies not in mere love of evil, but in the desire to acquire something.*

FOR there is a beauty in fair bodies, in gold and silver, and all things ; and in bodily touch, sympathy counts for much, and of the other senses each hath his corresponding measure of enjoyment. Worldly honour hath also its attractiveness, and the power of command and of conquest ; whence springs also the longing for revenge. But yet, to obtain all these, we may not depart from Thee, O Lord, nor wander from Thy law. The life also which here we live hath its own enchantment, through a certain measure of dignity, and a correspondence with all things beautiful here below. Human friendship also is pleasant with its tie of affection, by reason of the unity formed of many souls. Upon occasion of all these, and the like, is sin committed, while through an immoderate inclination towards these goods of the lowest order, the better and higher are forsaken,—Thou, our Lord God, Thy truth, and Thy law. For these lower things have their delights, but not like my God, who made all things ; for “in Him doth the righteous delight, and He is the joy of the true of heart” (Ps. lxiv. 10).

When, then, we ask why a crime was done, we believe it not, unless it appear that there might have been some desire of obtaining some of those which we called lower goods, or a fear of losing them. For they are beautiful and comely ; although in comparison with those higher and more blessed goods, they be abject and low. A man hath done murder. Why? he loved his victim's wife or his estate ; or would rob for his own livelihood ; or feared to lose some such things by him ; or, wronged, burned to revenge himself. Would any commit murder upon no cause, delighted in murder itself? who would believe it? for as for that mad and savage man, of whom it is said that he was " gratuitously evil and cruel," yet is the cause assigned ; " lest " (saith he) " through idleness hand or mind should grow inactive " (Sallust. Catil. 16). And to what end? that through that practice of crimes, he might, having taken the city, attain to honours, empire, riches, and be freed from fear of the laws, and the embarrassment of his affairs, through narrow means and consciousness of villanies. So then, not even Catiline himself loved his own villanies, but rather that for the sake of which he did them.

## CHAPTER VI.

*What it was that he loved in his theft ; since all things that prompt to sin by an appearance of goodness can be only true and perfect in God alone.*

WHAT then did wretched I so love in thee, thou theft of mine, thou deed of night, in that sixteenth year of my age? Fair thou wert not, for thou wert theft. But art thou any thing, that thus I speak to thee? Fair were the pears we stole, because they were Thy creation, Thou fairest of all, Creator of all, Thou good God ; God, the sovereign good and my true good. Fair were those pears, but not them did my wretched soul desire ; for I had store of better, and those I plucked only that I might steal. For, when plucked, I flung them away, and feasted only on my sin, which I was pleased to enjoy. For if aught of those pears came within my mouth, the sin was the seasoning. And now, O Lord my God, I ask what in that theft delighted me ; and behold it hath no beauty ; I mean not such



beauty as is in justice and wisdom ; nor even such as is in the mind and memory, and senses, and animal life of man ; nor yet as the stars are glorious and beautiful in their orbs ; or the earth or sea, full of embryo-life, replacing by its birth that which decayeth ; nay, nor even that false and shadowy beauty which belongeth to deceiving vices.

For pride doth ape highness ; whereas Thou only art God, Most High above all. Ambition, what seeks it, but honours and glory ? whereas Thou alone art to be honoured above all, and glorious for evermore. The cruelty of the powers that be, would fain be feared ; but who is to be feared but God alone, out of whose power what can be wrested or withdrawn ? when, or where, or whither, or by whom ? The charms of the wanton would fain be loved ; but there is nothing that hath more charm than Thy charity ; nor is aught loved more healthfully than that Thy truth which is beautiful and luminous above all. Curiosity seems to affect a desire of knowledge ; whereas Thou supremely knowest all. Yea, ignorance and very folly is cloaked under the name of simplicity and harmlessness ; because nothing is found more simple than Thyself. And what is more harmless than Thou art ? Truly his own deeds are the sinner's foes. Sloth again is a certain seeking after rest ; but what sure rest is there besides the Lord ? Luxury would prefer to be called sufficiency and abundance ; but Thou art the fulness and never-failing plenteousness of sweetness incorruptible. Prodigality presents a shadow of liberality : but Thou art the most plenteous Giver of all good things. Covetousness would possess many things ; and Thou possessest all things. Envy quarrels about excellency : what more excellent than Thou ? Anger seeks vengeance ; who avengeth more justly than Thou ? Fear trembles at unwonted and sudden adversities which endanger things beloved, and takes precautions for their safety ; but to Thee what unwonted or sudden, or who separateth from Thee what Thou lovest ? (Rom. viii. 9.) Or where but with Thee is unshaken safety ? Grief pines away for things now lost, in which covetousness used to take delight ; because it would have nothing taken from it, as nothing can be taken from Thee.

Thus doth the soul commit fornication, when she turns from Thee, seeking without Thee, what she findeth not

pure and untainted, till she returns to Thee. Thus all perversely imitate Thee, who put Thee far from them, and lift themselves up against Thee. But even by thus imitating Thee, they imply Thee to be the Creator of all nature; whence there is no place whither altogether to retire from Thee. What then did I love in that theft? and wherein did I even wickedly and perversely imitate my Lord? Did it please me to do contrary to Thy law, at any rate by artifice, if I could not by power, so that though a prisoner, I might mimic a maimed liberty by doing with impunity things unpermitted me, a shadowy likeness of Thy Omnipotency? Behold, Thy servant, fleeing from his Lord, and obtaining a shadow. O rottenness, O monstrosity of life, and depth and death! could I like what I might not, for nothing else than that I might not?

## CHAPTER VII.

*He renders thanks to God for the forgiveness of his sins; and warns against pride any whom God has kept from such grave offences.*

“WHAT shall I render unto the Lord” (Ps. cxvi. 12), that, whilst my memory recalls these things, my soul is not affrighted at them? “I will love Thee, O Lord, and give thanks unto Thee, and confess unto Thy name;” because Thou hast forgiven me these so great and wicked deeds of mine. To Thy grace I impute it, and to Thy mercy, that Thou hast melted away my sins as it were ice. To Thy grace I impute also that some evil I have left undone; for what might I not have done, who even loved a sin for its own sake? And I confess that all have been forgiven me; both those sins which, of my own will, I did, and those which, of Thy guidance, I left undone. What man is there who, conscious of his own infirmity, dares to ascribe his chastity and innocency to his own strength; that so he should love Thee the less, as though Thy mercy had been the less necessary for him; the mercy whereby Thou remittest sins to those that turn to Thee? For whosoever, called by Thee, followed Thy voice, and shunned those things which he reads me recording and confessing of myself, let him not scorn me, who being sick, was cured by

that Physician, through whose aid it was that he was not sick, or rather was less sick : and for this let him love Thee as much, yea and more ; since by whom he sees me to have been freed from the weary exhaustion of my sins, by Him he sees that he was saved from entanglement in the like exhaustion.

## CHAPTER VIII.

*That in the theft, it was the companionship of his fellow-sinners that he liked.*

“WHAT fruit had I then, “wretched man,” in those things, of the remembrance whereof I am now ashamed ?” (Rom. vi. 21). Especially, in that theft wherein I loved theft itself ? there was nothing else to love in it ; and since itself was nothing, was not I more wretched even than the theft ? Yet alone I had not done it : for I remember that my mind even then discerned that of myself I had never done it. I loved then in it also the companionship of the accomplices, with whom I did it ? Did I then love nothing else but the theft ? yea rather I did love nothing else, for that companionship was also nothing. What is, in truth ? who can teach me, save He that enlighteneth my heart, and discovereth its shadows ? What is it which hath come into my mind to enquire, and discuss, and consider ? For had I then loved the pears I stole, and wished to enjoy them, I might have done it alone, if the committing of that wickedness had sufficed to attain my pleasure ; nor needed I have inflamed the itching of my covetousness, by the flattery of accomplices. But since my pleasure was not in those pears, it was in the offence itself, which the association with fellow-sinners occasioned.

## CHAPTER IX.

*There is pleasure in laughter, and in the deceiving of others.*

WHAT then was that inclination of the mind ? For of a truth it was too foul : and woe was me, who had it. But yet what was it ? “Who can understand his errors” (Ps. xix. 12). It was the sport, which as it were,

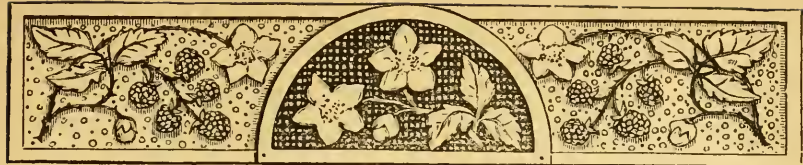


tickled our hearts, that we were deceiving those who had no idea of what we were about, and vehemently disliked it. Why then was my delight of such sort, that I did it not alone? Was it because none doth readily laugh alone? indeed no one doth so readily; yet laughter sometimes masters men alone and by themselves, when no one else is with them, if any thing very ridiculous presents itself to their senses or mind. Yet I had not done this alone; alone I had never done it. Behold my God, before Thee is the vivid remembrance of my soul; alone I had never committed that theft wherein the thing stolen gave me no pleasure, but only the stealing; nor would the stealing have given me pleasure by myself, nor would I have done it. O friendship too unfriendly! thou incomprehensible deception of the mind, thou greediness to do mischief out of sport and mirth, thou thirst of another's loss, without lust of my own gain or revenge: but when it is said, "Let's go, let's do it," we are ashamed not to be shameless.

## CHAPTER X.

*With God is true rest, and life undisturbed.*

WHO can unloose that most twisted and tangled knot? Foul is it: I hate the thought of it; I hate the sight of it. But Thee I long for, O Righteousness and Innocency, fair and comely to pure eyes, and of a satisfaction unsating. With Thee is true rest and life untroubled. Whoso enters into Thee, "enters into the joy of his Lord" (S. Matt. xxv. 21): and shall not fear, and shall find 'all good, in Thee, Most Good. I sank away from Thee, and I wandered, O my God, too much astray from Thee my stay, in my youth, and I became to myself a barren land.



## Book 333.

TREATS OF HIS SEVENTEENTH, EIGHTEENTH, AND NINETEENTH YEARS SPENT AT CARTHAGE, WHERE, IN ADDITION TO HIS STUDIES, HE WAS TAKEN IN THE SNARE OF LAWLESS LOVE, AND PLUNGED INTO MANICHÆAN ERRORS.

### CHAPTER I.

*Captive to a lawless passion, a man base and dishonourable would fain be fine and courtly.*

I CAME to Carthage, where there seethed all around me a cauldron of lawless loves. I loved not yet, yet I loved to love, and out of a deep-seated want, I hated myself for wanting not. I sought what I might love, in love with loving, and I hated safety, and a way without snares. For within me was a famine of that inward food, Thyself, my God; yet, through that famine I was not hungered; but was without all longing for incorruptible sustenance, not because filled therewith, but the more empty, the more I loathed it. For this cause my soul was unhealthy; and being ulcerous, miserably cast itself forth, seeking to be scraped by the touch of objects of sense. Yet if these had not a soul, they would not be objects of love. To love then, and to be beloved, was sweet to me; but more, when I obtained to enjoy the person I loved. I defiled, therefore, the spring of friendship with the filth of concupiscence, and I beclouded its brightness with the hell of lustfulness; and thus foul and unseemly, I would fain, through excess of vanity, be fine and courtly. I fell headlong then into the love, with which I longed to be taken captive. My God, my Mercy, with how much gall didst Thou out of Thy great goodness besprinkle for me that sweetness? For I was both beloved, and secretly

arrived at the bond of enjoying ; and rejoiced to be bound in sorrowful bonds, that I might be scourged with the red-hot iron rods of jealousy, and suspicions, and fears, and angers, and quarrels.

## CHAPTER II.

*He arouses empty feelings of pity in himself by stage plays.*

STAGE plays also carried me away, full of images of my miseries, and of tinder for my flame. Why is it that man desires to be there made sad, beholding grievous and tragical things, which yet himself would by no means suffer ? yet he desires as a spectator to feel grief at them, and this very grief is his pleasure. What is this but a miserable madness ? for a man is the more affected with these actions, the less free he is from such affections. Howsoever, when he suffers in his own person, it uses to be styled misery ; when from sympathy with others, then it is pity. But what sort of pity is this for the shams and shadows of the stage ? for the auditor is not moved to succour, but only asked to grieve ; and he applauds the actor of these fictions the more, the more he grieves. And if those human misfortunes, whether they be histories of olden times, or mere fictions, be so acted, that the spectator is not moved to grief, he goes away disdainful and censorious ; but if he be moved to grief, he stays intent, and enjoys the tears he sheds.

Are griefs then too loved ? Verily all desire joy. Or since no man likes to be miserable, yet we like to be pitiful ; and as this cannot be without some grief, is this the sole reason why griefs are loved ? This also arises from that spring of friendship. But whither goes that spring ? whither does it flow ? wherefore runs it into that torrent of pitch bubbling forth those monstrous tides of foul lusts, into which it is changed and transformed of its own motion, being twisted aside and cut off from its heavenly clearness ? Shall pity then be renounced ? by no means. Let griefs then sometimes be loved. But beware of uncleanness, O my soul, under the guardianship of my God, the " God of our fathers, who is to be praised and exalted above all for ever " (Dan. iii. 52, Vulg.) ; beware of uncleanness. For I

have not even now ceased to pity ; but then in the theatres I rejoiced with lovers, when they wickedly enjoyed one another, although this was imaginary only in the play. And when they lost one another, as if very pitiful, I sorrowed with them, yet had my delight in both the while. But now I much more pity him that rejoiceth in his wickedness, than him that suffers seeming hardships through lack of some pernicious pleasure, and the loss of some miserable felicity. This certainly is the truer pity, but in it grief is without delight. For though he that grieves for the miserable be commended for his office of charity, yet he who is genuinely pitiful would much prefer that there were nothing for him to grieve for. For if good will be ill willed, which cannot be, then may he, who truly and sincerely pities, wish there might be some miserable that he might pity them. Some sorrow may then be allowed, none loved. For thus dost Thou, O Lord God, who lovest souls far more purely than we, and hast more incorruptibly pity on them, yet art wounded with no sorrowfulness. "And who is sufficient for these things"? (2 Cor. ii. 16).

But I, miserable, then loved to grieve, and sought out what to grieve at, when in the misery of another, who only feigned and postured, that acting of a player best pleased me, and attracted me the most vehemently, which drew tears from me. What marvel that an unhappy sheep, erring from Thy flock, and impatient of Thy keeping, I became infected with a foul disease? And hence came the love of griefs, though not of such as should too deeply affect me. For I loved not to endure what I loved to look on ; but such that when I heard their fictions, I should, as it were, be tickled on the surface : upon which, as on nail scratches, followed inflamed swelling, corruption, and a horrid sore. Such was my life. But was it life, O my God?

### CHAPTER III.

*Not even in Church does he govern his desires ; in the rhetoric school he abhors the doings of the "Subverters."*

AND Thy faithful mercy hovered over me from afar. In what grievous iniquities did I consume away, and followed after a sacrilegious curiosity, that when forsaking



Thee it might bring me to the treacherous abyss, and the deceitful rites of devils, to whom I sacrificed my evil doings; and in all these things Thou didst scourge me! I dared even, during the celebration of Thy solemnities, within the walls of Thy church, to desire, and to compass a business, deserving death for its fruits, for which Thou scourgedst me with grievous punishments, though nothing to my fault, O Thou my exceeding mercy, my God, my refuge from those terrible destroyers, among whom I wandered with a stiff neck, withdrawing further from Thee, loving mine own ways, and not Thine; loving a fleeting liberty.

Those studies also, which were accounted honourable, had their purpose fixed upon the Law Courts, that I might excel in them, being considered more praiseworthy, the more crafty in deception. Such is men's blindness, glorying even in their blindness. And now I was chief in the rhetoric school, whereat I joyed proudly, and I swelled with arrogance, though (Lord, Thou knowest) far quieter and altogether removed from the subvertings of those "Subverters" (for this perverse and devilish name was a sort of mark of the "man about town") among whom I lived, with a shameless shame that I was not even as they. With them I lived, and was sometimes delighted with their friendship, though I ever held aloof from their doings, *i.e.*, their "subvertings," wherewith they wantonly railed at the modesty of strangers, which they disturbed by a gratuitous jeering, feeding thereon their malicious mirth. Nothing can be more like the actions of devils. What then could they be more truly called than "subverters"? themselves subverted and altogether perverted first, the deceiving spirits secretly deriding and seducing them in the very thing wherein themselves delight to jeer at, and deceive others.

#### CHAPTER IV.

*In his nineteenth year, two years after his father's death, the "Hortensius" of Cicero recalls his mind to philosophy, to God, and to a better mood of thought.*

AMONG such as these, in that inconstant age of mine, I kept learning books of eloquence, wherein I desired to be eminent, for a damnable and windy end, the gratifica-

tion of human vanity. / In the then usual course of study, I fell upon a certain book of Cicero, whose language almost all admire, not so his heart. This book of his contains an exhortation to philosophy, and is called *Hortensius*. But this book altered my disposition, and turned my prayers to Thyself, O Lord ; and changed my purposes and desires. Every vain hope at once became worthless to me ; and I began to yearn with an incredible fervour of heart for the immortality of wisdom, and began now to arise, that I might return to Thee. For not to sharpen my tongue (which thing I seemed to be purchasing with my mother's income, in that my nineteenth year, my father being dead two years before), not to sharpen my tongue did I pore over that book ; and it convinced me, not by the manner, but the matter of its eloquence.

How did I burn then, my God, how did I burn to soar again from earthly things to Thee ; and I knew not what Thou wouldest do with me. For with Thee is wisdom. But the love of wisdom is in Greek called "philosophy," with which that book inflamed me. Some there be that seduce through philosophy, under a great, and alluring, and honourable name colouring and disguising their own errors ; and almost all who in that and former ages were such, are in that book censured and set forth : there also is illustrated that wholesome advice of Thy spirit, by Thy good and devout servant ; "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. ii. 8, 9). And at that time (Thou, O light of my heart, knowest that this passage of the Apostle was not as yet known to me), I was delighted with this only, to wit, the exhortation that I should love, and seek, and follow after, and hold, and embrace, not this school or the other, but wisdom's self, wherever she might be : with that exhortation I was greatly stirred up, and enkindled, and inflamed ; and in my great ardour this only gave me pause, that the name of Christ was not in it. For this name, according to Thy mercy, O Lord, this name of my Saviour Thy Son, had my tender heart, even with my mother's milk, drunk in, and deeply treasured ; and whatsoever was without that name, though never so learned, polished, or truthful, took not entire hold of me.



## CHAPTER V.

*He throws aside Holy Scripture as being too simple, and by no means comparable with Cicero for dignity.*

I BEGAN then to turn my mind to the Holy Scriptures, that I might see what they were. But behold, I see a thing not understood by the proud, nor laid open to children, in mien lowly, in issue lofty, and veiled with mysteries ; and I was not such as could enter into it, or stoop my neck to follow its steps. For not as I now speak, did I feel when I turned to those Scriptures ; but they seemed to me undignified, in comparison with Ciceronian dignity ; for my swelling pride shrunk from their humble method, nor could my sharp wit penetrate their depths. Yet were they such as would grow up in a little one. But I disdained to be a little one ; and, swoln with arrogance, took myself to be a great one.

## CHAPTER VI.

*By his own fault he fell into the errors of the Manichæans, who boast of a true perception of God, and thorough investigation of all things.*

THEREFORE I fell among men raving with pride, very carnal and wordy, in whose mouths were the snares of the Devil, and a bird lime made up of a mixture of the syllables of Thy name, and of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Ghost, the Paraclete, our Comforter. These names departed not from their lips, though they were but a sound and a rattling of the tongue : for the heart was void of truth. Yet they said : “ the Truth, the Truth,” and spake much thereof to me, yet “ it was not in them ” (1 S. John ii. 4), but they spake falsehoods, not of Thee only (who truly art Truth), but even of those elements of this world, Thy creatures. And I indeed ought to have passed by even philosophers who spake truth concerning them, for love of Thee, my Father, supremely good, Beauty of all things beautiful. O Truth, Truth, how inwardly did even then the marrow of my soul pant after Thee, when they often and diversely, and in many and huge books, clamoured to me of Thee in empty words ! And these were the dishes wherein

to me, an hungered for Thee, were served up, instead of Thee, the Sun and Moon, Thy fair works; but yet Thy works, not Thyself, no nor Thy first works. For Thy spiritual works are before these corporeal works, though they be bright and poised in the sky. But I hungered and thirsted not even after those first works of Thine, but after Thee Thyself, the Truth, "in whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (S. James i. 17), yet they still set before me in those dishes, glittering phantasms, than which better were it to love this very sun (which is real to our sight at least), than those illusions which by our eyes deceive our mind. Yet because I thought them to be Thee, I fed thereon; not greedily, for Thou didst not in them savour to me as Thou art; for Thou wast not these empty figments, nor was I nourished by them, but rather exhausted. Food in dreams shews very like the food of waking men; yet are not those asleep nourished by it, for they are asleep. But those were not even any way like to Thee, as Thou hast now spoken to me; for those were corporeal phantasms, false bodies, than which these true bodies, which we see with our bodily sight, whether terrestrial or celestial, are far more certain: we share the sight of these with beasts and birds; and they are more certain than when we imagine them. And again, we do imagine them with more certainty than surmise from them other vaster and infinite bodies which have no sort of being. Upon such empty husks was I then fed: and yet was not fed. But Thou, my Love, for whom I faint, that I may become strong, art neither these bodies which we see, though in heaven; nor art Thou those which we see not there; for Thou hast created them, nor dost Thou account them among the chiefest of Thy works. How far then art Thou from those phantasms of mine, phantasms of bodies which have no existence whatever; than which fancy images of those bodies, which exist, are far more certain; and more certain still the bodies themselves, which yet Thou art not; no, nor yet the soul, which is the life of the bodies. So then, better and more certain is the life of the bodies, than the bodies. But Thou art the life of souls, the life of lives, having life in Thyself: and changest not, Thou life of my soul.

Where then wert Thou then to me, and how far from me? Far verily was I straying from Thee, shut out from the very

husks of the swine, which with husks I fed. For how much better are the trivial fables of grammarians and poets, than these deceits? For verse, and song, and “Medea flying,” are more profitable truly, than these men’s five elements, variously disguised, answering to five dens of darkness, which have no being, yet slay him that believes in them. For verse and song I can turn to true food, and even though I did sing of “Medea flying,” I affirmed it not; though I heard it sung, I believed not: but those things I did believe. Woe, woe, by what steps was I brought down to “the depths of hell!” (Prov. ix. 18), toiling and tempest tost for want of Truth, since I sought after Thee, my God (to Thee I confess it, who hadst mercy on me, though not as yet confessing it), not according to the understanding of the mind, wherein Thou willedst that I should excel the beasts, but according to the sense of the flesh. But Thou wert more inward to me, than my most inward part; and higher than my highest. I fell in with that bold woman, “simple and knoweth nothing,” according to Solomon’s parable, “sitting at the door, and saying, Eat ye with pleasure of bread in secret, and drink ye stolen waters which are sweet” (Prov. ix. 13, 17). She seduced me, because she found me dwelling abroad in the eye of my flesh, and ruminating on such food, as through it I had devoured.

## CHAPTER VII.

*He combats the Manichæan doctrine of Evil, of God, and concerning the righteousness of the Patriarchs.*

FOR I knew not anything truly, as it really is; and was, as it were, persuaded by their subtilty to cast in my lot with foolish deceivers, when they asked me, “whence comes evil?” and whether “God is contained within the bounds of bodily form, and hath hairs and nails?” and whether “they are to be esteemed righteous, who had many wives at once, and did slay men, and offered animals in sacrifice?” At which I, in my ignorance, was much troubled, and departing from the truth, seemed to myself to be making towards it; because as yet I knew not that evil was nothing but a privation of good, up to the point at

which a thing ceases altogether to be. And how should I see it, since with my eyes I could see body only ; and with my mind a phantasm ? And I knew not that " God is a Spirit " (S. John iv. 24) ; not such a being as hath members having length and breadth ; nor such as hath bulk ; for " bulk " is less in a part than in its whole ; and if it be infinite, it is less in such part as is contained within a definite space than in its infinitude ; and so is not wholly every where, as Spirit, as God. And what that could be in us, according to which we could be " like unto God," and might be rightly said in the Scriptures, to be " after the image of God " (Gen. i. 27) I was altogether ignorant.

Nor knew I that true inward righteousness, which judgeth not according to custom, but out of the most righteous law of God Almighty, whereby the moral habits of countries and periods were fashioned meetly for those countries and periods ; itself being always and everywhere the same, not here of one kind, and there of another ; according to which Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and Moses, and David, were righteous, and all those commended by the mouth of God ; but were judged unrighteous by unlearned men, " judging of man's day " (1 Cor. iv. 3), and measuring the collective moral habits of the human race by the partial standard of their own custom : as if in an armoury, one ignorant what were adapted to each limb should seek to cover his head with greaves, or to be shod with a helmet, and then should complain that they fitted amiss ; or as if on a day, when a public holiday has been appointed to be kept in the afternoon, one were angered at not being allowed to keep open shop, because he had been in the morning ; or when in one house he observeth some thing to be managed by some servant, which the butler is not suffered to meddle with ; or something done in the stable yard, which is forbidden in the dining-room ; and should be angry, since the house is one, and the family one, that the same thing is not allowed everywhere, and to all. Even such are they, who are angered to hear that something was permitted to the righteous in the olden time which now is forbidden ; or that God, for reasons arising from the times, gave to some one precept, to others another, though both were obedient to the same righteousness : whereas they see, in one man, and one day, and one house, different things to



be fit for different members, and a thing for a time lawful, after a certain time forbidden ; in one corner permitted or commanded, but in another rightly forbidden and punished. Is justice therefore various or mutable ? No, but the times, over which it presides, flow not evenly, because they are times. But men whose “days are few upon the earth,” because by their reason they cannot conform the causes of things in former ages and other nations, of which they have had no experience with these which they have experience of, whereas in one and the same body, day, or family, they easily see what is fitting for each member, and season, part, and person ; take exceptions to the former, but comply with the latter.

These things I then knew not, nor observed ; they struck upon my eyes on all sides, and I saw them not. I made verses, in which I might not place every kind of foot everywhere, but differently in different metres ; nor even in any one verse the self-same foot in all places. Yet the art itself of verse-making had not different principles for these different cases, but comprised all in one. Still I saw not how that righteousness, which good and holy men obeyed, did far more excellently and sublimely contain in one all those things which God commanded, and in no part varied ; although in varying times it prescribed not every thing at once, but apportioned and enjoined what was fit for each. And I, in my blindness, censured the holy patriarchs, not only wherein they made use of things present as God commanded and inspired them, but also wherein they were foretelling things to come, as God was revealing in them.

## CHAPTER VIII.

*He continues his argument against the Manichæans, concerning the nature of vices.*

CAN it at any time or place be unjust “to love God with all the heart, with all the soul, and with all the mind ; and our neighbour as ourself” ? (S. Matt. xxii. 37). Therefore are those foul offences which be against nature, to be everywhere and at all times detested and punished ; such as were those of the men of Sodom : which should all nations commit, they should all stand guilty of the same crime, by

the law of God, which hath not so made men, that they should so abuse one another. For even that fellowship which should be between God and us is violated, when that same nature, of which He is Author, is polluted by perversity of lust. But those offences which are contrary to men's customs, are to be avoided accordingly as customs vary with times ; so that a compact ratified by custom or law of any state or nation, neither native or foreigner may violate at will. For any part which accords not with its whole, is unseemly. But when God commands a thing to be done, against the custom or compact of any people, though it were never by them done heretofore, it is to be done ; and if intermitted, it is to be restored ; and if never ordained, is now to be ordained. For if it be lawful for a king, in the state which he reigns over, to command that, which no one before him, nor he himself heretofore, had commanded, and to obey him would not be against the common weal ; but rather it would be against the common weal *not* to obey him (for to obey princes is a general compact of human society) ; how much more ought we to obey God, the Ruler of the created universe, without hesitation, in all that He commands ! For among the powers of human society the greater authority is obeyed in preference to the lesser, so must God be chosen before all.

So in criminal actions, where there is a wish to hurt, whether by insult or injury ; and these either for the sake of revenge, as one enemy against another ; or to obtain some advantage belonging to another, as the robber to the traveller ; or to avoid some evil, as towards one who is feared ; or through envy, as one less fortunate to one more so ; or one that has thriven in anything, to him whose rivalry he fears, or laments his success in it ; or for the mere pleasure at another's pain, as spectators of gladiators, or deriders and mockers of others. These be the heads of iniquity, which spring from the lust of power, and "of the eye, and of the flesh" (1 S. John ii. 16), or from any one, or two, or all of them together ; and so do men live ill against the three, and seven,<sup>1</sup> "the instrument of ten strings" (Ps.

<sup>1</sup> S. Augustine adopts the division of the Commandments into tables three and seven, instead of the more familiar division amongst ourselves into "four," having reference to God, and "six" to our neighbour. The division referred to in the text lends itself more readily to the mystical system of interpreting numbers in Scripture.



cxliv. 9), Thy decalogue, O God, most high, and most sweet. But what foul offences can there be against Thee, who canst not be defiled? or what acts of violence against Thee, who canst not be harmed? But Thou avengest what men commit against themselves, seeing also when they sin against Thee, they do wickedly against their own souls, and "iniquity gives itself the lie" (Ps. xxvii. 12, Vulg.), whether by corrupting and perverting their nature, which Thou hast created and ordained, or by an immoderate use of things allowed, or in "burning" in things not allowed, after "that use which is against nature" (Rom. i. 26); or are found guilty, raging in thought and words against Thee, and "kicking against the pricks" (Acts ix. 5); or when, bursting the pale of human society, they boldly delight in private unions and separations, according as anything may have given them pleasure or offence. And these things are done when Thou art forsaken, O Fountain of Life, who art the only and true Creator and Governor of the Universe, and by a self-willed pride, any one false thing is selected therefrom and loved. So then by a humble devoutness we return to Thee; and Thou cleanseest us from our evil habits, and art merciful to their sins who confess, and "hearest the groaning of the prisoner" (Ps. cii. 20), and loosest us from the chains which we made for ourselves, if we lift not up against Thee the horns of a sham liberty, for the greed of having more, risking the loss of all, by loving our own private good more than Thee, the Good of all.

#### CHAPTER IX.

*God and men judge of human crimes by a different standard.*

**A**MIDST these offences of foulness and violence, and so many iniquities, are sins of men, who are making progress; which by those that judge rightly, according to the law of perfection, are condemned, yet the persons commended, in hope of future fruit, as the green blade has promise of corn. And there are some things resembling offences of foulness or violence, which yet are no sins; because they offend neither Thee, our Lord God, nor human society; when, namely, things fitting for a given

period are obtained for the use of life, and it is doubtful whether from a lust of having; or when things are punished, for the sake of correction, by constituted authority, and it is doubtful if from a lust of inflicting injury. Many an action then which in men's sight is disapproved, is by Thy testimony approved; and many, by men praised, are (Thou being witness) condemned: because the outward appearance of the action, and the motive of the doer, and the secret urgency of the occasion, are often different. But when Thou on a sudden commandest an unwonted and unthought of thing, yea, although Thou hast sometime forbidden it, and still for the time hidest the reason of Thy command, and it be against the compact of some society of men, who doubts but it is to be done, seeing that society of men is righteous which obeys Thee? But blessed are they who know that Thou hast commanded! For all things were done by Thy servants; either to show forth something needful for the present, or to foreshow things to come.

## CHAPTER X.

*He rebukes the follies of the Manichæans, concerning the fruits of the earth.*

IN my ignorance of these things I used to scoff at those Thy holy servants and prophets. And what gained I by scoffing at them, but to be scoffed at by Thee, being insensibly and step by step drawn on to such follies, as to believe that a fig wept when it was plucked, and the tree, its mother, shed milky tears? And if some saint should eat the fig, plucked though it had been by another's guilt, and not his own, and should inwardly digest it, he would breathe out angels from it, and in very truth, in the groaning of his prayer and heartburn, particles of Diety: which particles of the most high and true God would have remained bound in that fig, unless they had been set at liberty by the tooth or stomach of an "Elect" saint! And I, miserable, believed that more mercy was to be shown to the fruits of the earth, than men, for whom they were brought forth. For if any one an hungered, not a Manichæan, should ask for any, a morsel, if given to him, would seem to be sentenced to a sort of capital punishment.

## CHAPTER XI.

*He relates the tears of his mother, and a dream she had of heavenly comfort concerning her son.*

AND Thou "sentest 'Thine hand from above" (Ps. cxliv. 7), and didst deliver my soul out of that profound darkness, when my mother, thy faithful one, wept for me to Thee, more than mothers weep for the death of children's bodies. For she, by that faith and spirit which she had from Thee, discerned the death wherein I lay, and Thou heardest her, O Lord; Thou heardest her, and despisedst not her tears, when streaming forth, they watered the earth beneath her eyes in every place of her prayer; and Thou heardst her. For whence was that dream whereby Thou didst comfort her; so that she allowed me to live with her, and to eat at the same table in the house, which she had begun to forbid, shunning and detesting the blasphemies of my error? For she saw herself standing on a certain wooden rule, and a shining youth coming towards her, cheerful and smiling upon her, the while she grieved, and was consumed with grief: and when he had enquired of her the causes of her grief and daily tears (for the sake as is their wont of teaching, not of learning), and she had made answer that she was bewailing my perdition, he bade her be at ease, and advised her to look and observe, "That where she was, there was I also." And when she looked there, she saw me standing by her on the same rule. Whence was this, but that 'Thine ears were towards her heart? O Thou Good Almighty, who so carest for every one of us, as if Thou caredst for him only; and so for all, as if they were but one!

Whence was this also, that when she had told me this vision, and I would fain turn it so; "That she rather should not despair of being one day what I was;" forthwith, without any hesitation, she rejoins, "No; for it was not told me that, 'where he, there thou also;' but 'where thou, there he also?'" I confess to Thee, O Lord, that to the best of my remembrance (and I have oft spoken of this), I was far more impressed even then by that Thine answer, through my waking mother, that she was not disturbed by the specious similarity of my interpretation, and so quickly

saw what was to be seen, and what I certainly had not perceived, before she spake, than by that dream itself, by which a joy to the holy woman, to be fulfilled so long after, was, for the consolation of her present anguish, so long before predicted. For almost nine years passed, in which I wallowed in the mire of that deep pit, and the darkness of falsehood, often assaying to rise, but dashed down the more grievously; the while, however, that chaste widow, devout and sober (such as Thou lovest), though something brighter for the hope, yet no whit relaxing in her weeping and mourning, ceased not at all hours of her devotions to lay before Thee her sorrow on my behalf. And her "prayers entered into Thy presence" (Ps. lxxxviii. 2); and yet Thou didst suffer me to be more and more enveloped in that darkness.

## CHAPTER XII.

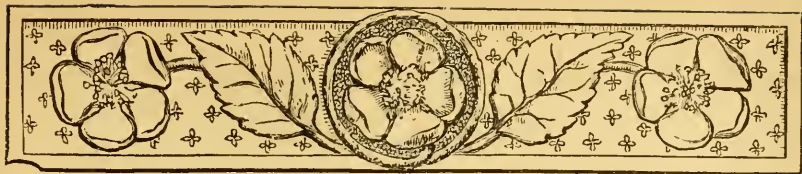
*The wise answer of a Bishop to his mother's entreaty that he would convert her son.*

THOU gavest also, meanwhile, another answer, which I call to mind. And many things beside I pass over, for I hasten to those things which most press me to confess unto Thee, and many things I do not remember. Thou gavest her then another answer, by a Priest of Thine, a certain Bishop brought up in Thy Church, and well learned in Thy books. For when this woman had entreated him to vouchsafe to converse with me, refute my errors, unteach me ill things, and teach me good things (for this he was wont to do, when he found persons fitted to receive it), he refused, wisely, as I afterwards perceived. For he answered, that I was yet unteachable, being puffed up with the novelty of that heresy, and had already perplexed divers unlearned persons with trifling questions, as she had told him; "but let him alone a while" (saith he), "only pray God for him; he will of himself by reading find what that error is, and how great its impiety." At the same time he told her, how himself, when a little one, had by his misguided mother been given over to the Manichæans, and had not only read, but frequently copied out almost all, their books, and had convinced himself, without anyone having argued or per-

suaded him, how much that sect was to be avoided ; and had avoided it. When he had said this, and she would not be satisfied, but urged him more, with entreaties and many tears, that he would see me, and discourse with me ; he, a little displeased at her importunity, saith, “Go thy ways, and God be with ye ; it is not possible that the son of these tears should perish.” Which answer she took (as she often mentioned in her conversations with me) as if it had been a voice from heaven.







## Book 3V.

HE DESCRIBES THE NINE YEARS WHICH FOLLOWED HIS NINETEENTH YEAR. HOW HE LOST HIS FRIEND, AND WROTE A TREATISE ON THE "FAIR AND FITTING." HOW HE GAVE SOME ATTENTION TO THE LIBERAL ARTS, AND TO THE ARISTOTELIAN CATEGORIES.

### CHAPTER I.

*Of the most unhappy time, in which, misled himself, he misled others :  
and of those who scoff at his confession.*

FOR this space of nine years then (from my nineteenth year, to my eight and twentieth) we were misled, and did mislead, deceived and deceiving, in divers lusts ; openly, by sciences which they call liberal ; secretly, with a false-named religion ; here proud, there superstitious, everywhere vain ! By the former hunting after the emptiness of popular praise, even the applause of theatres, prizes for verse competitions, the contest for garlands of hay, and the follies of shows, and the intemperance of lusts. By the latter, desiring to be cleansed from these defilements, by carrying food to those who were called "elect" and "saints," out of which, in the workshop of their stomachs, they should forge for us angels and gods, by whom we might be delivered. These things did I hunt after, and practise with my friends, deceived by me, and with me. Let the arrogant mock me, and such as have not been wholesomely stricken and smitten down, by Thee, O my God ; but let me still confess to Thee my shame in Thy praise. Suffer me, I pray, and grant me to go over in my present remembrance the by-gone strayings of my wandering feet, and to "offer unto Thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving" (Ps. cxvi. 17). For what am I to myself without Thee, but a guide to mine own downfall ? or what am I when it is well with me, but an infant



sucking the milk Thou givest, and enjoying Thee, “the food that perisheth not”? (S. John vi.). But what sort of man is any man, seeing he is but a man? Let now the strong and the mighty scoff at us, but let us “poor and needy confess unto Thee” (Ps. lxxiv. 21).

## CHAPTER II.

*How he taught rhetoric ; was true to one love ; and spurned the magician who promised success by his means.*

IN those years I taught the art of rhetoric, and vanquished by cupidity, used to sell the craft of conquering fluency. Yet I preferred (Lord, Thou knowest) honest scholars (as they are accounted), and these I, without artifice, taught artifices, not to be practised against the life of the guiltless, though sometimes for the life of the guilty. And Thou, O God, from afar didst see me, slipping in that mire, and amid much smoke sending out some sparks of faith, which I showed in my office of teacher toward “such as loved vanity, and sought after leasing” (Ps. iv. 2), myself being their companion. In those years I lived with one, to whom I was not joined in that which is called lawful wedlock, but whom my wayward passion, void of understanding, had found out ; yet with but one, and was faithful to her bed ; in whom I in my own case experienced, what difference there is betwixt the self-restraint of the marriage-covenant, for the sake of issue, and the bargain of a lustful love, where children are born against their parents’ will, although, once born, they constrain love.

I remember also, that when I had determined to compete for a prize for theatrical verse, some wizard asked me what I would give him to win : but I, detesting and abhorring those foul rites, answered, “Though the garland were of imperishable gold, I would not suffer a fly to be killed to gain me it.” For he would have killed some living creatures in his sacrifices, and would pretend by such honours to canvass for the suffrages of devils on my behalf. But this ill also I rejected, not out of a pure love for Thee, O God of my heart ; for I knew not how to love Thee, who knew not how to conceive aught beyond a material brightness. And doth not a soul, sighing after such fictions, commit fornication

tion against Thee, trust in false gods, and “feed the winds” (Hosea xii. 1). Still I would not forsooth have sacrifices offered to devils for me, to whom I was sacrificing myself by that superstition. For, what else is it “to feed the wind,” but to feed them, that is, by going astray to become their pleasure and their sport?

## CHAPTER III.

*Not even the most learned men could persuade him to abandon the folly of astrology to which he was devoted.*

THOSE impostors then, whom they style Mathematicians, I did not hesitate to consult; because they seemed to use no sacrifice, nor to pray to any spirit for their divinations; which thing, however, Christian and true piety meetly rejects and condemns. For “it is a good thing to confess unto Thee, O Lord,” and to say, “Have mercy upon me, heal my soul, for I have sinned against Thee” (Ps. xli. 5), and not to abuse Thy mercy for a license to sin, but to remember the Lord’s words, “Behold, thou art made whole, sin no more, lest a worst thing come unto thee” (S. John v. 14). All which wholesome advice they labour to destroy, saying, “The inevitable cause of thy sin is in the sky,” and “This did Venus, or Saturn, or Mars;” that man, forsooth, flesh and blood, and proud corruption, might be blameless; while the Creator and Ruler of sky and stars is to bear the blame. And who is He but our God? the very sweetness and fountain of righteousness; Thou “who renderest to every man according to his works” (Rom. ii. 6); and “a broken and contrite heart wilt Thou not despise” (Ps. li. 17).

There was in those days a wise man,\* very skilful in physic, and renowned therein, who as proconsul, had with his own hand placed that garland of victory upon my distempered head, but not as a physician. For Thou art the only healer of such distemper; “who resistest the proud, and givest grace to the humble” (1 St Peter v. 5). But didst Thou fail me even by that old man, or forbear to heal my soul? For having become better acquainted with him,

\* Vindicianus. See Book vii., chap. 6.

I hung assiduously and fixedly on his speech, for though in style it was unpolished, yet in matter it was lively, gay, and weighty. When he had gathered by my discourse, that I was given to the books of the seers that calculate nativities, he kindly and fatherly advised me to cast them away, and not fruitlessly to expend a care and labour, necessary for useful things, upon that vain folly ; saying that he had studied that art, as in his early years he had wished to adopt it as a profession, and as a means of livelihood ; and that if he could understand Hippocrates, he could certainly have understood such a study as this ; and yet he had abandoned it, and taken to medicine, for no other reason but that he found it utterly false ; and he, a grave man, could not bring himself to get his living by deluding people. “But thou,” saith he, “hast rhetoric whereby to maintain thyself, so that thou followest this deceptive art of free choice, not of necessity : the more then oughtest thou to give me credit herein, who laboured to master it so perfectly, as by it alone I hoped to get my living.” Of whom when I had demanded, “What cause then brings it about, that many things afterwards proving true, have been foretold by it ?” he made answer, as he well might, that “The force of chance diffused throughout the whole order of things, hath brought this about. For if from the pages of some poet, who sang and thought of something wholly different, when anyone has referred to them at random, a verse hath oftentimes fallen out, marvellously apt to the business in hand : it cannot be wondered at, if out of the soul of man, unconscious what takes place in it, by some higher instinct an answer should be given, by hazard, not by art, which might harmonise with the affairs and actions of the enquirer.

And thus much, either from or through him, Thou didst possess me with, and didst grave in my memory, what I might hereafter examine for myself. But at that time neither he, nor my dearest Nebridius, a youth singularly good and guarded, who laughed at the whole system of divining, could persuade me to cast it aside, for the authority of the authors swayed me yet more ; and as yet I had found no certain proof (such as I sought) whereby it might without all doubt appear, that what had been truly foretold by those consulted was the result of chance or coincidence, not of the art of the observers of the stars.

## CHAPTER IV.

*Being deeply sorrow-stricken upon the death of his friend, he found no consolation but in tears.*

IN those years when I first began to give lessons in my native town, I had made a friend, especially dear to me, from a community of studies, who was of my own age, and, like myself, in the first opening flower of youth. He had grown up in boyhood with me, and we had been both school-fellows, and play-fellows. But he was not yet my friend as afterwards, nor even then, as true friendship is; for true friendship cannot be, unless Thou dost cement it in those who cleave to Thee by that "love which is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Rom. v. 5). Yet was it but too sweet, welded by our ardour for kindred studies. For, from the true faith (which as a youth he did not fully and thoroughly hold) I had turned him aside to those superstitious and pernicious fables, which gave my mother such grief for me. With me he now erred in mind, nor could my soul be without him. But behold Thou, following hard upon Thy fugitives, at once "God of vengeance" (Ps. xciv. 1), and Fountain of mercies, who dost convert us to Thyself by wonderful means,—behold Thou didst take that man out of this life, when he had scarce filled up one whole year of my friendship, sweet to me above all sweetness of that my life.

"Who can shew forth all Thy praises" (Ps. cvi. 2), which he hath experienced in himself alone? What diddest thou then, my God, and how unsearchable is the "abyss of Thy judgments" (Ps. xxxvi. 6). For long, sore sick of a fever, he lay insensible in a death-sweat, and being quite given up, he was baptised, unknowing, myself meanwhile little regarding, and feeling confident that his soul would retain rather what it had received of me, not what was wrought on his unconscious body. But it fell out quite otherwise: for he was restored and saved.\* Forthwith, as soon as I could speak with him (and I could, so soon as he

\* "Recreatus est, et salvus factus." It is difficult to suppose that S. Augustine did not mean these words spiritually, as well as physically.



was able, for I never left him, and we were but too dependent upon each other), I essayed to jest with him, as though he would be sure to jest with me at that baptism which he had received, when utterly absent in mind and feeling, but had by this time been told that he had received. But he so shrunk from me, as from an enemy; and with a wonderful and sudden freedom bade me, if I still desired to be his friend, to cease to say such things to him. I, all astonished and amazed, suppressed all my emotions till he should recover, and so regain his strength that I might deal with him, as I would. But he was rent away from my madness, that with Thee he might be preserved for my consolation; a few days after, in my absence, he was attacked again by the fever, and died.

At this grief my heart was utterly darkened; and whatever I beheld was death. My native country was a torment to me, and my father's house a strange unhappiness; and whatever I had shared with him, for lack of him became a ghastly torture. Mine eyes sought him every where, but he was not granted them; and I hated all things, since they held him not; nor could they now tell me, "he is coming," as when he was alive and absent. I became a great problem to myself, and I asked my soul, "why she was so heavy, and why she disquieted me sorely" (Ps. xliii. 5); but she had no word to answer me. And if I said, "Trust in God," she very rightly obeyed me not; because that most dear friend, whom she had lost, was, though but human, both truer and better, than that phantasm in which she was bidden to trust. Only tears were sweet to me, and took my friend's place in my heart's affections.

## CHAPTER V.

*Of weeping: why it is pleasant to the wretched.*

AND now, Lord, these things are passed by, and time hath assuaged my wound. May I learn from Thee, who art Truth, and approach the ear of my heart unto Thy mouth, that Thou mayest tell me why weeping is pleasant to the wretched? Hast Thou, although present everywhere, cast away our misery far from Thee? And Thou



abidest in Thyself, but we are tossed about in divers trials. And yet unless we mourned in Thine ears, nothing of our hope would remain to us. Whence then is sweet fruit gathered from the bitterness of life, from groaning, weeping, sighing, and complaining? Doth this sweeten it, that we hope Thou hearest? This is true of our prayers, for in them we yearn to approach unto Thee. But is it also in grief for a thing lost, and the mourning wherewith I was then overwhelmed? For I neither hoped he should return to life, nor did I desire this with my tears; but I only sorrowed and wept. For I was miserable, and had lost my joy. Or is weeping indeed a bitter thing, and for very loathing of the things, which we before enjoyed, does it then, when we shrink in disgust from them, please us?

## CHAPTER VI.

*He holds that of his friend, though dead, in himself the half remains alive.*

BUT why speak I of these things? for now is no time of research, but to confess unto Thee. Wretched I was; and wretched is every soul bound by the friendship of perishable things; he is torn asunder when he loses them, and then he perceives the wretchedness, which he had, even before he lost them. So was I then; I wept most bitterly, and found my rest in bitterness. Thus was I wretched, and even that wretched life I held dearer than my friend. For though I would willingly have changed it, yet was I more unwilling to lose it, than him. Yea, I know not whether I would have parted with it even for him, as is related (though perhaps it is fiction) of Pylades and Orestes, that they would gladly have died for each other or together, not to live together being to them worse than death. But in me there had arisen some feeling, for which I cannot account, very opposite to this; for the direst weariness of life possessed me, and at the same time a fear of death. I believe that the more I loved him, the more did I hate, and fear (as a most cruel enemy) that death, which had taken him from me: and I imagined it would suddenly devour all men, because it had power over him. Thus was it with

me, I remember. Behold my heart, O my God, behold and see into me ; for I remember it, O my Hope, who cleansest me from the impurity of such feelings, directing “ mine eyes towards Thee, and plucking my feet out of the snare ” (Ps. xxv. 15). For I marvelled that other mortal men should be alive, since he whom I had loved, as if he should never die, was dead ; and I marvelled the more that I, since I was but his other self, should be alive when he was dead. Well hath one said of his friend, “ Thou half of my soul : ” for I felt that my soul and his soul were “ one soul in two bodies : ” and therefore was my life a horror to me, because I loathed that only half of me should be alive : and hence perchance I feared to die, lest he should wholly die, whom I had loved much.

## CHAPTER VII.

*He is so greatly harassed by restlessness and sorrow that he leaves his birthplace, and returns to Carthage.*

**O** MADNESS, which knowest not how to love men, like men ! O foolish man that I then was, fretting without measure against the lot of man ! So I raged, I sighed, I wept, I was distraught : without rest, without counsel. For I bore about a torn and bleeding soul, impatient of being borne by me, yet where to repose it, I found not. Not in pleasant groves, not in sports and songs, not in fragrant spots, not in splendid banquets, not in the pleasure of the bed and the couch ; not (finally) in books or poesy, did it find rest. All things looked ghastly, yea, the very light ; whatsoever was not what he was, was revolting and hateful, except groaning and tears. For in those alone found I some little relief. But when my soul was withdrawn from them a huge burden of misery weighed me down. To Thee, O Lord, it ought to have been lifted up, for Thee to lighten ; I knew it ; but neither would nor could ; the more, since, when I thought of Thee, Thou wert not to me anything real or substantial. For Thee, I had not, but an empty phantasm, and my error was my God. If I tried to cast my burden there, that it might rest, it glided through the void, and fell down again on me ; and I had remained to myself a hapless spot, where I could neither be, nor thence

depart. For whither should my heart flee from my heart? Whither should I flee from myself? Whither not follow myself? And yet I fled from my own country, for mine eyes would be less apt to look for him, where they were not wont to see him. And thus from Thagaste, I came to Carthage.

## CHAPTER VIII.

*How his grief yielded to time, and to the consolations of friends.*

TIME does not stand still ; neither does it roll without effect through our senses ; but works wondrous changes in the mind. For lo, it came and went from day to day, and by coming and going, introduced into my mind other imaginations, and other remembrances ; and little by little patched me up again with my old kind of interests, before which my sorrow slowly yielded ; and yet there succeeded, not indeed other griefs, yet the causes of other griefs. For whence had that former grief so easily and so deeply pierced me, but that I had poured out my soul upon the sand, in loving one that must die, as if he would never die ? But what chiefly restored and refreshed me, were the consolations of other friends, with whom I did love, what instead of Thee I loved ; and this was a great fable, and protracted lie, by whose adulterous stimulus, our soul, which lay itching in our ears, was being defiled. But that fable would not die to me, so oft as any of my friends died. There were other things which in them did more take my mind ; to converse together, and to jest together, to do each other kindnesses, to read together agreeable books, to trifle together, or to be earnest together ; to differ together at times without heat, as a man might with his own self ; and by the extreme rarity of our differences, to season our most usual unanimity ; sometimes to teach, and sometimes learn ; long for the absent with impatience ; and welcome the coming with joy. These and the like expressions, proceeding out of the hearts of those that loved and were loved again, by the countenance, the tongue, the eyes, and a thousand pleasing gestures, were so much fuel to melt our souls together, and out of many make but one.

## CHAPTER IX.

*That human friendship, which consists in interchange of love, perishes, and that he alone who loves his friend in God, loseth him never.*

THIS is it that is loved in friends ; and so loved, that a man's conscience condemns itself, if he love not him that loves him again, or love not again him that loves him, looking for nothing from his person, but tokens of good will. Hence that mourning, if one die, and the dark clouds of sorrows, that steeping of the heart in tears, all sweetness turned to bitterness ; and from the lost life of them that die, the death of them that live. Blessed is he that loveth Thee, and his friend in Thee, and his enemy for Thee. For he alone loses no dear one to whom all are dear in Him who is never lost. And who is this but our God, the "God that made heaven and earth, and filleth them," because by filling them He created them ? Thee none loseth, save he that forsaketh. And whoso forsaketh Thee, whither goeth or whither fleeth he, but from Thee smiling to Thee frowning ? For where doth he not find Thy law in his own punishment ? "And Thy law is truth" (Ps. cxix. 42), and "Thou art Truth" (S. John xiv. 6).

## CHAPTER X.

*That all things that begin to be hasten to their end ; and that we are not saved unless God have us in His keeping.*

"TURN Thou us, O God of Hosts, shew us Thy countenance, and we shall be saved" (Ps. lxxx. 19). For whithersoever the soul of man turns itself, unless towards Thee, it cleaveth to sorrows, yea even though it cleaveth to things beauteous, apart from Thee, and apart from itself. For these things can have no being unless they have their being from Thee ; these things which rise and set, and at their rising, begin, as it were, to be, and grow that they may reach their perfection, and when perfected wax old and perish. And all things grow not old ; but all perish. In truth when they are arising, and beginning to be ; the more they speed to grow into being, the more they speed towards



ceasing to be. This is the law of them. Thus much hast Thou appointed them, because they are portions of things, which exist not all at once, but by their departures and successions they together complete that universe, whereof they are portions. And even thus is our speech completed by means of symbols of sound. For our speech will not be completed unless one word pass away when it hath uttered its syllables, that another may succeed. Out of all these things let my soul praise Thee, O God, Creator of all; yet let it not cleave to them with the bond of love, through the senses of the body. For they go whither they were going, towards ceasing to be; and they rend her with pestilent regrets; because she desires that they may continue to be, and loves to repose in what she loves. But there is not in these things where she may rest; for they abide not, they flee; and who can follow them with his bodily sense? yea, who can grasp them, even when they are close at hand? For the sense of the flesh is slow, because it is the sense of the flesh; and itself is its limit. It sufficeth to that for which it was made; but it sufficeth not to hold back things that hasten on their course from their appointed beginning to their appointed end. For in Thy Word, by which they are created, they hear their decree, "from hence and hitherto."

## CHAPTER XI.

*That parts of the universe art not to be loved; but the changeless God, that fashioneth them, and His eternal Word.*

BE not vain, O my soul, nor become deaf in the ear of thine heart with the tumult of thy vanity. Harken thou too. The Word itself calleth thee to return: and there is the place of thy rest undisturbed, where love is not forsaken, if itself forsaketh not. Behold, some things pass away, that others may replace them, and so this lower universe be completed in all his parts. But do I depart any whither? saith the Word of God. There fix thy dwelling, there commit whatsoever thence thou hast, O my soul, at least now that thou art wearied with deceits. To the Truth commit whatsoever thou hast from the Truth, and thou shalt lose nothing; and thy decay shall bloom again, and



“all thy diseases be healed” (Ps. ciii. 3), and thy mortal parts be reformed and renewed, and re-knit for thee ; nor shall they lay thee whither themselves descend ; but they shall stand fast with thee, and abide for ever before God, “who abideth and standeth fast for ever” (1 Peter i. 23).

Why then art thou perverted to follow thy flesh ? Let it be converted and follow thee. Whatever by it thou perceivest, is in part ; and the whole, whereof these are parts, thou knowest not ; and yet they delight thee. But if the sense of thy flesh had capacity to comprehend the whole, and had not itself for thy punishment been justly limited to a part of the whole, thou wouldest desire that whatsoever existeth in the present should pass away, that so the whole might please thee more. For what we speak also, by that same sense of the flesh thou hearest ; yet wouldest not thou have the syllables stand still, but fly away, that others may come, and thou mayest hear the whole. And so ever, when any one thing is made up of many parts, all of which do not exist together, if it could be perceived as a whole, the whole would more delight than the several parts. But far better than these, is He who made all ; and He is our God, nor doth He pass away, for neither doth aught succeed Him.

## CHAPTER XII.

*Love is not condemned : but love in God excelleth ; in which is rest, through Jesus Christ.*

IF bodies please thee, praise God on occasion of them, and incline again thy love towards their Maker ; lest in these things which please thee, thou displease. If souls please thee, let them be loved in God : for they too are changeful, but in Him are they firmly stablished ; else would they pass, and pass away. In Him then let them be loved ; and transport unto Him along with thee what souls thou canst, and say to them, “Him let us love, Him let us love : He made these, nor is He far off. For He did not make them, and so depart, but they are of Him, and in Him. Look now, where is He ? where is truth relished ? He is within the very heart, yet hath the heart strayed from Him. ‘Return again to your heart, ye transgressors’ (Is.

xlvi. 8), and cleave fast to Him that made you. Stand with Him, and ye shall stand. Rest in Him, and ye shall be at rest. Whither go ye in rough ways? Whither go ye? The good that you love is from Him; but so much as is referred to him is good and pleasant. But bitter shall it righteously become, for unrighteously is aught from Him loved, if He be forsaken. Wherefore then do ye still and still tread these difficult and toilsome ways? There is no rest, where ye seek it. Seek what ye seek; but it is not there where ye seek it. Ye seek a blessed life in the realm of death; it is not there. For how should there be a blessed life, where even life is not?"

And hither did our Life Himself come down, and bare our death, and slew him, out of the abundance of His own life: and He thundered, calling aloud to us to return hence to Him into that secret place, whence He came forth to us, first into the Virgin's womb, wherein He espoused to Himself our creaturely humanity, our mortal flesh, that it might not be for ever mortal, and thence "like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, He rejoiced as a giant to run His course" (Ps. xix. 5). For He tarried not, but ran, crying aloud by words, by deeds, by death, by life, by descent, by ascension; crying aloud to us to return unto Him. And He departed from our eyes, that we might return into our heart, and there find Him. For He departed, and lo, He is here. He would not be long with us, yet left us not; for He departed thither, whence He never parted, "because the world was made by Him." And "He was in the world," and "He came into this world to save sinners" (S. John i. 10; 1 Tim. i. 15), unto whom my soul confesseth, "and He healeth it, for it hath sinned against Him" (Ps. xli. 4). "O ye sons of men, how long so slow of heart?" (Ps. iv. 3, Vulg.) Nay, but since Life hath come down, will ye not ascend and live? But whither ascend ye, when ye are on high, and "set your mouth against the heavens"? (Ps. lxxiii. 9). Descend, that ye may ascend, and ascend to God. For ye have fallen, by ascending against Him. Tell them this, that they may weep "in the vale of misery" (Ps. lxxxiv. 6), and thus transport them with Thee unto God: for by His Spirit dost thou tell them these things, if thou tell them burning with the fire of charity.

## CHAPTER XIII.

*Love hath its origin in the attraction exercised by grace and beauty.*

THESE things I then knew not, and I used to love lower forms of beauty, and I was sinking to the very depths, and to my friends I used to say, "Do we love anything but the fair? What then is the fair? and what is the being fair? What is it that attracts and wins us to the things we love? for unless there were in them a grace and beauty, they could by no means draw us unto them." And I marked and perceived that in bodies themselves one thing was a sort of completeness, from whence came fairness; and another source of beauty was in their being fitly adjusted to each other, as a part of the body is to the whole, or a shoe to the foot, and the like. And this consideration streamed upon my mind, out of my inmost heart, and I wrote "on the fair and fit," I think, two or three books. Thou knowest, O Lord, for it is gone from me; for I have them not, but they have gone from me, I know not how.

## CHAPTER XIV.

*Of the books he wrote upon "The Fair and Fit," which were dedicated to Hierius, the Roman.*

BUT what moved me, O Lord my God, to dedicate these books unto Hierius, an orator of the city of Rome, whom I knew not by face, but loved for the fame of his teaching, which was renowned? And I had heard certain words of his, which pleased me, but more did he please me, for that he pleased others, who highly extolled him, amazed that out of a Syrian, first trained in Greek eloquence, should afterwards be formed a remarkable speaker in Latin, and that he should be profoundly skilled in things pertaining unto philosophy. One is praised, and though absent, is loved. Doth this love enter the heart of the hearer from the mouth of him that praises? Not so. But one is kindled by another's love. For hence he is loved, who is bepraised, when he is believed to be commended out of an unfeigned heart; that is, when one that loves him, praises him.

For so did I then love men, upon the judgment of men, not Thine, O my God, in whom no man is deceived. But yet why should I not, as a famous charioteer or as some beast fighter is celebrated by the popular devotion, but far otherwise, and earnestly, and so as I would be praised myself? For I should not like to be praised or loved, as actors are (though I myself did commend and love them), but would rather be unnoticed than so known; and even hated, than so loved. Where now are the impulses to such various and divers kinds of loves laid up in one soul? Why, since we are equally men, do I love in another what, if I did not hate, I should not abhor and reject for myself? For it cannot be accounted for in the same way, as in the case of a good horse, which is loved by one who would not change places with him even if he could, in the case of an actor, who shares our own nature. Do I then love in a man what I should hate to be, though I am a man myself? Man himself is a great deep, whose very "hairs Thou numberest" (S. Matt. x. 30), O Lord, and they are not lost in Thy sight. And yet are the hairs of his head easier to be numbered, than are his affections, and the motions of his heart.

But that orator was of the type that I loved, and would myself be like unto; and I erred through a swelling pride, and "was carried about with every wind" (Eph. iv. 14); but yet was steered by Thee, though very secretly. And whence do I know, and whence do I confidently confess unto Thee, that I had loved him for the love of them that praised him, rather than for the very things for which he was praised? Because, had he been unpraised, and these selfsame men had blamed him, and with blame and scorn told the very same things of him, I had never been so kindled and excited to love him. And yet the things would have been no other, nor the man himself other; but the only difference would have lain in the affections of the narrators. See where the unstable soul lies prostrate, which is not yet stayed upon the firm support of truth! As the winds of talk blow from the breasts of speculation-mongers, so is it borne along, and turned and twisted, and twisted again, and its light is beclouded, and the truth is unseen. And lo, it is before us. And it was to me a great matter, that my discourse and labours should attract the notice of



that man. And should he approve them, I should be the more ardent ; but if he disapproved, my empty heart, unstayed by thy firm support, had been wounded. And yet the “fair and fit,” whereon I wrote to him, I turned over in my mind, contemplating and surveying it, and admired it, though none shared my admiration.

## CHAPTER XV.

*In this treatise, being blinded by corporeal images, he failed to discern the spiritual nature of God.*

BUT I saw not yet, the hinge on which this great matter turned in Thy skill, O Thou Almighty, “who only doest wonders” (Ps. cxxxvi. 4), and my mind wandered among corporeal forms ; and “fair,” I defined and distinguished as that which is so in itself, and “fit,” that which is beautiful as it corresponds to some other thing : and I quoted in confirmation corporeal illustrations. And I turned to the nature of the mind, but the false notion which I had of spiritual things, prevented my discerning the truth. Yet the mere might of truth did force itself under my eyes ; and I wrenched away my panting spirit from the incorporeal, to forms, and colours, and vasty bulks. And because I could not see these in the mind, I thought I could not see my mind. And whereas in virtue I loved peace, and in viciousness I abhorred discord ; in the first I observed an unity, but in the other, a sort of division. And in that unity, I conceived the rational soul, and the nature of truth and of the supreme good to consist : but in this division I miserably imagined that there was some unknown substance of irrational life, and the nature of the supreme evil, which was not only a substance, but real life also, and yet not derived from Thee, O my God, of whom are all things. And moreover that first I called a Monad, as being a mind without any sex ; but the latter a Duad ;—anger, exhibited in crimes of violence, and lust in vicious practices : not knowing whereof I spake. For I had not known, or learned, that no substance was evil, and that our mind was not the supreme and unchangeable good.

For as deeds of violence arise, if that emotion of the



mind, whence vehement action springs, be corrupted, and behave itself with insolence and turbulence; and lusts, when that affection of the soul is ungoverned, whereby carnal pleasures are drunk in, so do errors and false opinions pollute the life, if the reasonable soul itself be corrupted; as it was then in me, who knew not that it must be enlightened by another light, that it may be partaker of truth, seeing itself is not that nature of truth. "For Thou shalt light my candle, O Lord my God, Thou shalt enlighten my darkness" (Ps. xviii. 28): "and of Thy fulness have we all received, for Thou art the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (S. John i. 16, 9): "for in Thee there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (S. James i. 17).

But I kept on striving towards Thee, and was thrust from Thee, that I might taste of death: for "Thou resistest the proud" (1 Pet. v. 5). But what prouder, than that with a marvellous madness I should assert that I was by nature, that which Thou art? For whereas I was subject to change, and this was manifest to me in my very desire to become wise, being the wish to change from worse to better; yet chose I rather to imagine Thee subject to change, than that I was not that which Thou art. Therefore I was thrust from Thee, and Thou didst resist my windy stiff-neckedness, and I imagined corporeal forms, and—myself flesh, I accused flesh; and, a "wind that passeth away, I returned not" (Ps. lxxviii. 39) to Thee, but I passed on and on to things which have no being, neither in Thee, nor in me, nor in the body. Neither were they created for me by Thy truth, but by my vanity devised out of things corporeal. And I was wont to ask Thy faithful little ones, my fellow citizens (from whom, unknown to myself, I stood exiled), I was wont, as a garrulous fool, to ask them, "Why then doth the soul err which God created?" But I would not be asked, "Why then doth God err?" And I preferred to argue that Thy unchangeable substance had been compelled to err, rather than confess that my changeable substance had chosen of its own will to turn aside from the way, and now for a punishment lay in error.

I was then some six or seven and twenty years old when I wrote those volumes; revolving within me corporeal fictions, buzzing in the ears of my heart, which I turned,

O sweet truth, to thy inward melody, meditating on the "fair and fit," and longing to stand and hearken to Thee, and "to rejoice greatly at the Bridegroom's voice" (S. John iii. 29), but I could not; for by the voices of mine own errors, I was hurried abroad, and through the weight of my own pride, I was sinking into the lowest pit. For Thou didst not "make me to hear of joy and gladness, nor did my bones rejoice which were not yet humbled" (Ps. li. 8).

#### CHAPTER XVI.

*He understood with ease the liberal arts, and Aristotle's "Categories,"  
but did not truly profit by them.*

AND what did it profit me, that when I was scarcely twenty years old, a certain treatise of Aristotle, which they call the *Ten Categories*, fell into my hands (on the name of which I hung, agape, as upon something great and divine, when the Carthaginian orator, my master, made mention of it, with cheeks cracking with pride, and others also, who were accounted learned), and I read and understood it, without help. And when I conferred with others who said they had scarcely understood it with the help of most able masters, who not only lectured upon it, but even drew many diagrams, upon the sand, they could tell me no more of it than I had learned by reading it by myself. And the book appeared to me to speak very clearly of substances, such as "man," and of their distinctive features: thus the figure of a man, of what sort it is; and stature, how many feet high; and his relationship, whose brother he is; or where placed; or when born; or whether he stands or sits; or be shod or armed; or does, or suffers anything; and all the innumerable things which might be ranged under these nine classes, of which I have given something in illustration, or under the class of "substance" itself.

What did all this profit me, nay rather it injured me, since, imagining whatever was, was comprehended under those ten Predicaments, I essayed in such wise to understand, O my God, Thy wonderful and unchangeable Unity also, as if Thou also hadst been subjected to Thine own greatness or beauty; so that (as in bodies) they should

exist in Thee, as their subject: whereas Thou Thyself art Thy greatness and beauty; but a body is not great or fair in that it is a body, seeing that, though it were less great or fair, it should notwithstanding be a body. But it was falsehood which of Thee I conceived, not truth; fictions of my misery, not the realities of Thy Blessedness. For Thou hadst commanded, and so it came to pass in me, that the "earth should bring forth briars and thorns to me," and that "with labour should I come by my bread" (Gen. iii. 18, 19).

And what did it profit me, that I, the vilest slave of evil passions, read by myself all the books of so-called "liberal" arts; and understood whatever I could read? And I delighted in them, but knew not whence came whatsoever therein was true or certain. For I had my back to the light, and my face to the things enlightened; whence my face, with which I discerned the things enlightened, itself was not enlightened. Whatever was written, either on the art of oratory or debate, on geometry, music, and arithmetic, without much difficulty or any instructor, I understood, Thou knowest, O Lord my God; because both quickness of understanding, and acuteness in discerning, is Thy gift: yet did I not thence sacrifice to Thee. So then it served not to my use, but rather to my perdition, since I went about to get so good a "portion of my substance" into my own keeping; and I "kept not my strength for Thee," but wandered from Thee "into a far country, to squander it upon harlot desires" (con. S. Luke xv. *passim*). For what did a good thing profit me, who did not use it well? For I did not perceive that those arts were attained with great difficulty, even by the studious and talented, until I attempted to explain them to such; when he most excelled in them, who was not quite so slow as the rest in following my exposition.

But what did this profit me, while I imagined that Thou, O Lord God, the Truth, wert a vast and bright body, and I a fragment of that body? Perverseness too great! But such was I. Nor do I blush, O my God, to "confess to Thee Thy mercies towards me," and to call upon Thee, who blushed not then to profess to men my blasphemies, and to bark against Thee. What profited me then my nimble wit in those sciences and all those most knotty volumes, un-

ravelled by me, with no support from human teaching; seeing I erred so foully, and with such sacrilegious shamefulness, in the doctrine of piety? Or what injury was a far slower wit to Thy little ones, since they departed not far from Thee, that safe in the nest of Thy Church they might grow their fledgling feathers, and nourish the wings of charity, with the food of a sound faith. O Lord our God, “under the shadow of Thy wings let us put our trust” (Ps. lxiii. 8); protect us, and carry us. Thou wilt carry us both when little, and “even to hoar hairs wilt Thou carry us” (Is. xlv. 4). For when Thou art our strength, it is strength indeed; but when it is our own, it is infirmity. Our good ever lives with Thee; but when we turn away from thence we are perverted. Let us now, O Lord, return, that we may not be overturned, because with Thee our good lives without any decay, which good art Thou alone; nor need we fear, lest there be no place whither to return, because we fell from it: for through our absence, our mansion fell not—Thy eternity.





## Book V.

HE DESCRIBES HIS TWENTY-NINTH YEAR. HOW HE DISCOVERED THE FALLACIES OF THE MANICHÆANS, AND BECAME A PROFESSOR OF RHETORIC IN ROME AND MILAN. HOW HE HEARD S. AMBROSE, AND BEGAN TO RETURN TO HIS RIGHT MIND.

### CHAPTER I.

*That it becomes the soul to praise God, and to confess to Him.*

ACCEPT the sacrifice of my confessions offered by my tongue, which thou hast formed and stirred up to confess unto Thy name. "Heal Thou all my bones, and let them say, O Lord, who is like unto Thee?" (Ps. xxxv. 10), for he that confesses to Thee, doth not inform Thee of what is wrought within him; seeing a closed heart cannot shut out Thine eye, nor can man's hardheartedness thrust back Thy hand: for Thou dost melt it, when Thou willest, either in pity or in vengeance, "and there is none hid from Thy heat" (Ps. xix. 6). But let my soul praise Thee, that it may love Thee; and let it confess to Thee Thy mercies, that it may praise Thee. Thy whole creation ceaseth not Thy praises, and is silent never: neither the spirit of every man, by his voice directed towards Thee, nor creatures animate or inanimate, by the voice of those who meditate thereon: that so our souls may from their weariness arise towards Thee, leaning on those things which Thou hast created, and passing on to Thyself, who madest them wonderfully; and there is refreshment and true strength.

### CHAPTER II.

*Of the vanity of them that would escape from God, seeing He is everywhere present.*

LET the restless and the unrighteous depart and flee from Thee; yet thou seest them, and dividest the darkness; and behold, all things with them are fair, but



themselves are foul. And how have they injured Thee? or how have they dishonoured thy government, which, from the heavens to this lowest earth is just and perfect? For whither fled they, when they fled from Thy presence? or where dost not Thou find them? But they fled, that they might not see Thee, who seest them, and, blinded, might stumble against Thee; because "Thou forsakest nothing Thou hast made" (Wisd. xi. 25), that the unjust might stumble against Thee, and justly be hurt; withdrawing themselves from Thy gentleness, and stumbling at Thy righteousness, and falling upon their own ruggedness. Indeed, they know not that thou art everywhere, and that no place encloseth Thee; and Thou alone art near, even to those that are far off from Thee. Let them then be converted and seek Thee; because not as they have forsaken their Creator, hast Thou forsaken Thy creature. Let them be converted and seek Thee; and behold, Thou art there in their heart, in the heart of those that confess to Thee, and cast themselves upon Thee, and weep in Thy bosom, after all their rugged ways. Then dost Thou graciously wipe away their tears, and they weep the more, and joy in weeping; even for that Thou, Lord—not man of flesh and blood, but—Thou, Lord, who madest them, dost renew them and console them. But where was I, when I was seeking Thee? And Thou wert before me, but I had departed even from myself; nor did I find myself, how much less Thee!

### CHAPTER III.

*Having heard Faustus, the most learned bishop amongst the Manichæans, he understandeth that God, the Creator of things animate and inanimate, hath especial care for the lowly.*

I WILL now declare, in the presence of God, the twentieth year of my age. There had at that time come to Carthage, a certain Bishop of the Manichæans, Faustus by name, a great snare of the Devil, and many were entangled by him through the charm of his fluent speech: but though I praised it, I was able to distinguish it from the truth of the things which I hungered to learn: nor did I care so much how that Faustus, so renowned among them, dished up his discourse, as what kind of food of knowledge he set

before me. Fame had before bespoken him most knowing in all honourable learning, and especially well equipped in the liberal sciences. And since I had read many treatises of philosophers, and kept in my mind their maxims, I compared some things of theirs with those long fables of the Manichæans, and the former struck me as more probable, which they taught who “were able only to know so much as to judge this present world, though by no means could they find out the Lord thereof” (Wisdom xiii. 9). “For thou art great, O Lord, and hast respect unto the lowly, but the proud Thou beholdest afar off” (Ps. cxxxviii. 6). Nor dost thou “draw near,” but to “the contrite in heart” (Ps. xxxiv. 18); nor art found by the proud; not even if by curious skill they could number the stars and the sand, and measure the starry regions, and track the paths of constellations.

For with their understanding and wit, which Thou bestowedst on them, they search out these things; and much have they found out; and foretold, many years before, eclipses of those luminaries, the sun and moon, at what day and hour they would be, and whether partial or total; nor did their calculation fail; and it came to pass as they foretold; and they wrote down the laws they had discovered, and these are read at this day, and out of them do others foretell in what year, and month of the year, and what day of the month, and what hour of the day, and what part of its light, moon, or sun is to be eclipsed, and as it is predicted, so will it happen. At these things men, that know not this art, marvel, and are astonished, and they that know it, exult, and are puffed up; and through their ungodly pride withdraw themselves from Thy Light, and are in eclipse, and though so long before they can foresee a coming eclipse of the sun, their own present eclipse they see not. For they search not religiously whence they have the wit, wherewith they search out this. And finding that Thou madest them, they give not themselves up to Thee, that Thou mayest keep what Thou hast made; nor do they sacrifice themselves to Thee, being such as they have made themselves; nor slay their own soaring imaginations, as “fowls of the air,” nor their own curious enquiries, wherewith, like the “fishes of the sea,” they walk through the secret paths of the deep (*cf.* Ps. viii. 8); nor their own wantonness, as

“beasts of the field,” that “Thou, Lord, a consuming fire” (Deut. iv. 24), mayest burn up those dead cares of theirs, and renew them to immortality.

But they knew not the Way, Thy Word, by Whom Thou madest these things which they number, and themselves who number, and the sense whereby they perceive what they number, and the understanding, by which they number ; or that “of Thy wisdom there is no number” (Ps. cxlvii. 5). But the Only Begotten is Himself “made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification” (1 Cor. i. 30), and was numbered among us, and “paid tribute unto Cæsar” (S. Matt. xvii. 27). They knew not this Way whereby to descend to Him from themselves, and by Him ascend unto Him. They knew not this Way, and deemed themselves exalted amongst the stars and shining ; and behold, they fell to the earth “and their foolish heart was darkened” (Rom. i. 21). They discourse many things truly concerning the creature ; but Truth, Artificer of the creature, they seek not piously, and therefore find him not ; or if they find Him, “knowing Him to be God, they glorify Him not as God, neither are thankful, but become vain in their imaginations, and profess themselves to be wise” (Rom. i. 21, 22), attributing to themselves what is Thine ; and thereby with most perverse blindness, seek to attribute to Thee what is their own, speaking lies against Thee who art the Truth, and “changing the glory of the uncorruptible God, into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things, changing Thy truth into a lie, and worshipping and serving the creature more than the Creator” (Rom. i. 23-25).

Yet I remembered many truths concerning the creature declared by these men ; and their reasoning was confirmed to me by their calculations, and the succession of times, and the visible testimony of the stars ; and I compared them with the sayings of Manichæus, who in his crazy folly has written much and copiously upon these subjects ; but none of his reasoning of the solstices, nor equinoxes, nor eclipses, nor whatever of this kind I had learned in books of secular philosophy, was satisfactory to me. But I was commanded to believe ; and yet it corresponded not with the reasonings obtained by calculations, and by my own observations, but was quite contrary.

## CHAPTER IV.

*That no scientific acquaintance with things terrestrial or celestial can give happiness, but only the knowledge of God.*

**D**OOTH then, O Lord God of truth, whoso knoweth these things, therefore please Thee? Nay, but unhappy is the man who knoweth all these, and knoweth not Thee: but happy whoso knoweth Thee, though he know not these. And whoso knoweth both Thee and them, is not the more blessed for knowing them, but for Thee alone is blessed, if, "knowing Thee, he glorifies Thee as God, and is thankful, and becomes not vain in his imaginations" (Rom. i. 21). For as he is better off, who knows how to possess a tree, and returns thanks to Thee for the use thereof, although he know not how many cubits high it is, or how wide it spreads, than he that can measure it, and count all its boughs, and neither possesses it, nor knows or loves its Creator: so a faithful man, to whom all the world of wealth belongs, and "who having nothing, yet possesseth all things" (2 Cor. vi. 10), by cleaving unto Thee, whom all things serve, though he know not even the circles of the Great Bear, yet is it folly to doubt but he is in a better state than one who can measure the heavens, and number the stars, and weigh the elements, yet neglecteth Thee "Who hast made all things in number, weight, and measure" (Wisd. xi. 20).

## CHAPTER V.

*Concerning Manichæus; his pertinacity in teaching falsehood, and his pride in claiming to be the Holy Spirit.*

**B**UT yet who bade that Manichæus write on these things also, since piety could be learnt without any skill in such matters? "For Thou hast said to man, Behold, piety is wisdom" (Job xxviii. 28); of the one he might be ignorant, though he had a perfect knowledge of these things; but inasmuch as he most impudently dared to teach these things, though he knew nothing about them, he plainly could have no knowledge of piety. For it is vanity to make profession of these worldly things even when



known; piety is to make confession to Thee. Wherefore this man, wandering from the way, to this end spake much of these things, that convicted by those who had truly learned them, it might be manifest what understanding he had in the other things more abstruse. For he would not have himself slightly valued, but attempted to persuade men, "That the Holy Ghost, the Comforter and Enricher of Thy faithful ones, was in Person within him, with plenary authority." When then he was found out to have taught falsehoods of the heaven and stars, and of the motions of the sun and moon (although these things pertain not to the doctrine of religion), yet it was plain enough that his pretensions were sacrilegious, seeing he delivered things which not only he knew not, but which were falsified, with so mad a vanity of pride, that he sought to ascribe them to himself, as to a divine person.

For when I hear any brother Christian, ignorant of this or that, and mistaking one thing for another, I can patiently bear with his fancy; nor do I see that any harm can come to him, so long as he does not believe anything unworthy of Thee, O Lord, the Creator of all, even if he happens to be ignorant about the "situation" and "possession" \* of the material creation. But it doth injure him, if he imagine it to pertain to the form of the doctrine of piety, and will dare to assert over confidently that of which he is ignorant. And yet is even such an infirmity, in the cradle time of faith, borne by our mother Charity, till the new man may "grow up unto a perfect man," so as "not to be carried about with every wind of doctrine" (Eph. iv. 13, 14). But in him, who in such wise presumed to be the teacher, source, guide, chief of all whom he could so persuade, that whoso followed him, thought that he followed, not a mere man, but Thy Holy Spirit; who would not judge that so great madness would be at once detested, and utterly rejected, so soon as he should be convicted of having spoken falsehood? But I had not as yet clearly ascertained whether the variations of the longer and shorter days and nights, and of day and night itself, with the eclipses of the greater lights, and whatever else of the kind I had read of in other books, might be explained consistently with his

\* See *ante*, Book iv. Chap. xvi. "Situs" and "Habitus," situation and possession, are two of the ten categories.



sayings ; so that, if they by any means might, it should still remain a question to me, whether it were so or no ; but I might, on account of his reputed sanctity, have rested my belief upon his authority.

## CHAPTER VI.

*Faustus was an eloquent disputant but ignorant of the Liberal Sciences.*

AND for almost all those nine years, wherein with unsettled mind I had been a hearer of their teaching, I had longed but too intensely for the coming of this Faustus. For others of them, whom by chance I had lighted upon, when unable to answer my objections about these things, used to promise me that he would come ; and that, in conference with me, upon his coming these difficulties and even any greater, if I desired it, would be resolved for me in the clearest way. When then he came, I found him agreeable, and pleasant of address, and fluent to express, though in a much more pleasant manner, all those things which they were wont to say. But what availed the most courteous butler to assuage my thirst for a rarer vintage ? Mine ears were already wearied of such things, nor did they seem to me therefore better, because better said ; nor therefore true, because eloquent ; nor the soul therefore wise, because the face was comely, and the expressions eloquent. But they who had made me promises about him were no good judges of things ; and therefore to them he appeared a man of wisdom and understanding, because his speech delighted them. I felt however that another sort of people were suspicious even of truth, and refused to assent to it, if delivered in an ornate and florid discourse. But Thou, O my God, hadst already taught me by wonderful and secret ways ; and for this reason I believe that Thou didst teach me, because it is truth, nor is there besides Thee any teacher of truth, wherever or whencesoever it shines forth upon us. Of Thyself therefore had I already learned, that a thing ought not to be held to be truly spoken, because eloquently spoken ; nor therefore falsely, because the syllables are not carefully arranged ; and again not therefore true, because rudely delivered ; nor therefore false, because the

language is brilliant ; but that wisdom and folly are much the same as wholesome and unwholesome food ; but that whether in words ornate or inornate, just as either in choice dishes or in delf, either kind of food can be served.

That hunger then wherewith I had of so long time looked forward to the coming of that man, was delighted indeed with his action and passion when disputing, and his choice and ready fluency of words aptly fitted to clothe his ideas. For I was delighted, and shared with many, and even outpassed many in praising and extolling him. But I misliked that in the assembly of his auditors I was not permitted to press upon him and confer with him upon the anxieties of my difficulties, in familiar converse, and in the give and take of controversy. And when I had an opportunity, and took occasion to engage his attention, together with my associates, at a time when it was becoming to enter upon discussion, and submitted to him certain matters which had perplexed me, I found him first utterly ignorant of liberal sciences, save grammar, and that but in an ordinary way. But because he had read some of Tully's Orations, a very few books of Seneca, some things of the poets, and such few volumes of his own sect, as were written in Latin and in logical order, and was daily practised in speaking, he acquired a certain eloquence, which proved the more pleasing and seductive, because under the control of his good sense, and with a certain natural grace. Is it not thus, as I recall it, O Lord my God, Thou Judge of my conscience? before Thee is my heart, and my remembrance, Who didst at that time direct me by the hidden mystery of Thy providence, and didst "set those shameful errors of mine before my face" (conf. Ps. l. 21), that I might see and hate them.

## CHAPTER VII.

*By God's grace he departs from the falsehoods of the Manichæans, now clearly perceived.*

FOR after it became clear to me, that he was ignorant of those arts in which I had thought he excelled, I began to despair of his opening and solving the difficulties which

perplexed me; of which indeed however ignorant, he might have held the truths of piety, had he not been a Manichæan. For their books are full of lengthy fables, of the heaven, and stars, sun, and moon; and I now no longer thought him able with any subtlety to explain, what I especially desired, whether in comparison with the calculations I had elsewhere read, the account of these matters given in the books of Manichæus were more truthful, or indeed whether an equally satisfactory explanation could be got from them. But when I brought forward these things for consideration and discussion, he, so far modestly, shrunk from the burthen. For he knew that he did not know these things, and was not ashamed to confess it. For he was not one of those loquacious people, like many that I had suffered from, who attempted to teach me these things, and said nothing. But this man had a heart, though not right towards Thee, yet not wholly careless towards himself. For he was not altogether ignorant of his own ignorance, and did not choose to be caught in a dispute upon these matters, where there was no outlet, and no easy means of retreat. Even for this I liked him the better. For the modesty of a candid mind is even more attractive than the knowledge of those things which I desired; and such I found him, in all the more difficult and subtile questions.

My zeal for the writings of Manichæus being thus shattered, and despairing yet more of their other teachers, seeing that in divers things which perplexed me, he, though so renowned among them, had so turned out; I began to engage with him in the study of that literature, on which he also was much set (and which as rhetoric-reader I was at that time teaching young students at Carthage), and to read with him, either what himself desired to hear, or such as I judged fit for his genius. But all my efforts whereby I purposed to gain advantage in that sect, after my acquaintance with that man, came utterly to an end; not that I entirely separated myself from them, but as one finding nothing better, I had settled to be content meanwhile with what I had in whatever way fallen upon, unless by chance something more eligible should dawn upon me. Thus that Faustus, to so many a snare of death, had now, though he neither wished it, nor knew that it was so, begun to loosen that in which I had been taken. For Thy hands, O my

God, in the secret purpose of Thy providence, did not forsake my soul ; and out of my mother's heart's blood, by her daily and nightly tears, was a sacrifice offered for me unto Thee ; and Thou didst deal with me by wondrous and secret ways. Thou didst it, O my God : for " the steps of a man are ordered by the Lord, and He shall dispose his way " (Ps. xxxvii. 23). Or what shall obtain salvation for us, except Thy hand renew what Thou hast made ?

## CHAPTER VIII.

*He sets out for Rome, though his mother in vain dissuades him.*

THOU didst deal with me, that I should be persuaded to go to Rome, and to teach there rather, what I was teaching at Carthage. And how was I persuaded to this ? I will not omit to confess to Thee ; because herein also the deepest recesses of Thy wisdom, and Thy most present mercy to us, must be discerned and declared. I did not wish to go to Rome, because of the higher gains and higher dignities which my friends, who persuaded me to this, held out to me, though even these things had at that time an influence over my mind ; but my chief and almost only reason was, that I heard that young men studied there more quietly, and were restrained by a more regular system of discipline ; so that they did not wantonly and at random rush into the school of one, whose pupils they were not, nor were even admitted without his permission. At Carthage, on the contrary, the license among the scholars is disgraceful and unruly. They break in impudently, and with a well nigh frantic expression disturb the order which any one has established for the good of his scholars. They commit many outrages with extraordinary effrontery, which could be punished by law, did not custom afford protection ; a custom which shows them to be the more miserable, in that they now do as lawful, what by Thy eternal law shall never be lawful ; and they think they do it unpunished, whereas they are punished with the very blindness whereby they do it, and the punishments they suffer are incomparably worse than the offences they commit. The manners then which, when a student, I



would not make my own, I was fain, as a teacher, to endure in others : and so I preferred to go where, all that knew it, assured me that the like was not done. But Thou, "my hope and my portion in the land of the living" (Ps. cxlii. 5), that I might change my earthly habitation for the salvation of my soul, at Carthage didst goad me, that I might thereby be torn from it ; and at Rome didst proffer me allurements, whereby I might be attracted thither, by men in love with a dying life, the former by their frantic doings, the latter by their empty promises ; and, to correct my steps, didst secretly make use, both of their and my perversity. For both they who disturbed my quiet, were blinded with a disgraceful frenzy, and they who invited me elsewhere, savoured of earth. While I, who here detested real misery, was there seeking an unreal happiness.

But why I should depart hence and go thither, Thou didst know, O God, yet shewedst it neither to me, nor to my mother, who grievously bewailed my journey, and followed me as far as the sea. But I deceived her, as she held me by force, that either she might keep me back, or go with me, and I feigned that I had a friend whom I could not leave, till he had a fair wind to sail. And I lied to my mother, and such a mother, and escaped : for this also hast Thou mercifully forgiven me, preserving me, who was so vilely stained with sins, from the waters of the sea, for the water of Thy Grace ; that when I was washed in this, the rivers from my mother's eyes, with which she daily used to water the ground beneath her face on my behalf before Thee, might be dried up. And yet refusing to return without me, I scarcely persuaded her to stay that night in a place hard by our ship, where was a memorial chapel in honour of S. Cyprian. That night I stealthily set out ; but she remained in weeping and prayer. And what, O Lord, was she with so many tears asking of Thee, but that Thou wouldest not suffer me to sail ? But Thou, in the depth of Thy counsels giving ear to the purport of her desire, didst not effect what then she was asking, that thou mightest do in me what she was ever asking. The wind blew and swelled our sails, and the shore sank from our sight ; and she on the morrow was there, frantic with sorrow, and with complaints and groans filled Thine ears, who didst then disregard them ; whilst through my desires, Thou wert



hurrying me to end those very desires, and her carnal regret for my departure was chastened by the allotted scourge of sorrows. For she loved my being with her, as mothers do, but much more than many; and she knew not how great joy Thou wert about to work for her out of my absence. She knew not; therefore did she weep and wail, and by this agony there was manifested in her the heritage of Eve, with sorrow seeking, what in sorrow she had brought forth. And yet, after accusing my deceit and cruelty, she betook herself again to intercede to Thee for me, and departed, she to her wonted habits, I to Rome.

## CHAPTER IX.

*He lies dangerously ill of a fever.*

AND lo, there was I taken with the scourge of bodily sickness, and I was going down to hell, bearing all the sins which I had committed against Thee, and myself, and others, many and grievous, over and above that bond of original sin, whereby we "in Adam, all die" (1 Cor. xv. 22). For Thou hadst not forgiven me any of these things in Christ, nor had He "abolished by His cross the enmity" (Eph. ii. 14) which by my sins I had incurred with Thee. For how should He, by the crucifixion of a phantasm, which I believed Him to be? As then the death of His Flesh seemed to me to be fictitious, so was the death of my soul real: and as the Death of His Flesh was real, so was the life of my soul, which disbelieved it, fictitious. And now the fever heightening, I was parting and perishing. For had I then parted hence, whither had I departed, but into fire and torments, such as my deeds deserved in the truth of Thy appointment? And this she knew not, yet in absence, prayed for me. But Thou, everywhere present, heardest her where she was, and, where I was, hadst compassion upon me; that I should recover the health of my body, though frenzied as yet in my impious heart. For I did not in all that danger desire Thy baptism; and I was better as a boy, when I begged it of my mother's piety, as I have before recited and confessed. But I had grown up to my own shame, and I in my madness scorned thy healing

counsels, who wouldest not suffer me, though I was such an one, to die the second death. For if my mother's heart had been stricken with such a wound, healed had it been never. For I cannot express the affection she bare to me, and with how much more vehement anguish she was now in labour of me in the spirit, than when she bare me in the flesh.

I see not then how she should have been healed, had such a death of mine pierced through the bowels of her love. And where would have been those her prayers, so fervent and so frequent, without cessation? nowhere, unless with Thee. But wouldest Thou, God of mercies, "despise the contrite and humble heart" (Ps. li. 17), of that chaste and sober widow, so frequent in almsdeeds, so full of duty and service to Thy saints, no day intermitting the oblation at Thine altar, twice a day, morning and evening, without any intermission, coming to Thy church, not for empty fables, and old wives' gossip; but that she might hear Thee in Thy discourses, and Thou her, in her prayers? Couldst Thou despise and reject from Thy aid the tears of such an one, wherewith she begged of Thee not gold or silver, nor any changeful or fleeting good, but the salvation of her son's soul? Thou, by whose gift she was such? Never, Lord. Yea, Thou wert at hand, and wert hearing and doing, in that order wherein Thou hadst predestined that it should be done. Far be it that Thou shouldest deceive her in Thy visions and answers, some of which I have already recorded, others I have not, which she kept in her faithful heart, and ever praying, used to press upon Thee, as though given under Thine own hand. For Thou, "because Thy mercy endureth for ever" (Ps. cxviii.), vouchsafest to those to whom Thou "forgivest all their debts," to become also a debtor by Thy promises.

## CHAPTER X.

*After leaving the Manichæans he retained low opinions concerning God, and sin, and the Incarnation.*

THOU didst restore me then of that sickness, and didst save the son of Thy handmaid, as regards his bodily health, that he might await Thy giving of a better and more

sure salvation. And even then, at Rome, I joined myself to those deceived and deceiving "saints": not with their "hearers" only (of which number was he, in whose house I had fallen sick and recovered), but even with those whom they call "The Elect." For I still thought, "that it is not we ourselves that sin; but that some other nature (what, I know not) sins in us"; and it delighted my pride, to be free from blame; and when I had done any evil, not to confess I had done any, "that Thou mightest heal my soul because it had sinned against Thee" (Ps. xli. 4), but I loved to excuse it, and to accuse I know not what other thing, which was with me, but which was not I. But in truth it was wholly I, and mine impiety had divided me against myself; and that sin was the more incurable, whereby I considered that I was not a sinner; and execrable iniquity it was, that I should prefer that Thou, O God Almighty, should be overcome in me to my destruction, than that I should be overcome by Thee, to my salvation. Not as yet then hadst Thou "set a watch before my mouth, and a door of self-restraint around my lips, that my heart might not turn aside to evil words, to make excuses of sins, with men that work iniquity: and, therefore, was I still united with their Elect" (Ps. cxli. 3, 4).

But now despairing of getting any advantage in that false doctrine, even those things (with which if I should find no better, I had resolved to rest contented) I now held with greater laxity and negligence. For a thought sprang up within me, that those philosophers, whom they call Academics, were wiser than the rest, because they held that men ought to doubt every thing, and declared that no truth can be comprehended by man. For so, even to me, they clearly seemed to think, as is the common opinion of them, for I did not yet understand their meaning. But I made no secret of discouraging that host of mine from the over-confidence which I perceived him to have in those fables, of which the books of Manichæus are full. Yet I lived in more familiar friendship with them, than with others who were not of this heresy. Nor did I maintain it with my ancient eagerness: still my intimacy with that sect (for Rome gives concealment to many of them) made me slower to seek any other way: especially since I despaired of finding the truth, from which they had turned me aside, in

Thy Church, O Lord of heaven and earth, Creator of all things visible and invisible; and it seemed to me very unseemly to believe Thee to have the form of human flesh, and to be contained within the bodily limitations of our members. And because, when I wished to think on my God, I knew not what to think of, but a mass of bodies (for what was not such, did not seem to me to be any thing), this was the greatest, and almost only cause of my inevitable error.

For hence I believed Evil also to be some such kind of substance, and to have its own foul, and hideous bulk; whether gross, which they called earth, or thin and subtle (like the body of the air), which they imagine to be some malignant mind, creeping through that earth. And because some sort of piety constrained me to believe, that the good God had created no evil nature, I conceived two masses, mutually antagonistic, both infinite, but the evil narrower, the good greater. And from this pestilent beginning, the other blasphemies followed. For when my mind sought to revert to the Catholic faith, I was repelled, since that was not the Catholic faith, which I thought to be so. And I thought it more reverent in me, my God, to whom Thy mercies make confession by my means, to believe Thee infinite on all sides, except upon that one, where the mass of evil opposed itself against Thee, and I was bound to confess Thee to be finite; than if I should imagine Thee to be contained on every side within the limits of a human bodily form. And it seemed to me better to believe Thee to have created no evil, which to me in my ignorance appeared to be not only a substance, but even a bodily substance, because I knew not how to conceive of mind, unless it were some subtle body, which diffused itself throughout some defined area, than to believe that the nature of evil, according to my notion of it, came from Thee. Yea, and our Saviour Himself, Thy Only Begotten, I believed to have been reached forth (as it were) for our salvation, out of the mass of Thy most lucid substance, so as to believe nothing of Him, but what I could imagine in my vanity. His Nature then, being such, I thought could not be born of the Virgin Mary, without being mingled with the flesh: and how that which I had so figured to myself, could be mingled, and not defiled, I did not see. I feared therefore to believe



Him born in the flesh, lest I should be forced to believe Him defiled by the flesh. Now will Thy spiritual ones mildly and lovingly smile upon me, if they shall read these my confessions. Yet such was I.

## CHAPTER XI.

*Helpidius well argued with the Manichæans, concerning the authenticity of the New Testament.*

FURTHERMORE, what the Manichæans had criticised in Thy Scriptures, I thought could not be defended; yet at times I strongly desired to confer, point by point, with some one, learned in their books, and to discover what he might think about them. For already the discourses of a certain Helpidius, who spoke openly, and disputed against those same Manichæans, had begun to influence me, even at Carthage, for he brought forth from the Scriptures certain things which could not easily be refuted, and their response seemed to me feeble. And even this answer they did not readily produce in public, but to us with some secrecy; to the effect, that the Scriptures of the New Testament had been falsified by I know not whom, who wished to engraft the law of the Jews upon the Christian faith: yet themselves produced not any uncorrupted copies. But those "masses" chiefly held me down, captive, and almost suffocated, for I pondered only of corporeal things: and beneath their weight I gasped for the pure and clear air of Thy truth, and could not breathe.

## CHAPTER XII.

*He practises as a rhetorician at Rome, and experiences the fraudulence of the students.*

I BEGAN then diligently to practise that for which I came to Rome, namely, to teach the art of rhetoric; and first, to gather some to my house, to whom, and through whom, I was beginning to be known; when lo, I found out that things were done at Rome which I did not suffer in Africa. In truth it was made clear to me that those "sub-



vertings" were not these practised by profligate youths ; but say they, "suddenly to escape paying their master, many of the youths conspire together, and betake themselves to another, breaking their faith, and counting justice cheap compared with love of money." These also "my heart hated," though not "with a perfect hatred" (Ps. cxxxix. 22), for perchance I hated them more because I was likely to suffer by them, than because they used to act unlawfully to all and sundry. Of a truth such are base persons, and they commit fornication against Thee, by loving these fleeting mockeries of time, and filthy lucre, which fouls the hand that grasps it ; hugging the fleeting world, and despising Thee, who abidest, and recallest, and forgivest the adulteress soul of man, when she returns to Thee. Even now I hate such depraved and crooked persons, though I love them to be corrected, so as to prefer to money the learning, which they acquire, and to learning, Thee, O God, the truth and plenteousness of sure good, and the most pure peace. But at that time it was rather that I did not choose to endure them in their badness, for my own sake, than that I wished them to be made good for Thine.

### CHAPTER XIII.

*He is sent to Milan to teach rhetoric, and becomes acquainted with Ambrose.*

WHEN therefore they of Milan had sent to Rome to the prefect of the city, to furnish them with a rhetoric reader for their city, and send him at the public expense, I made application (through those very persons, intoxicated with Manichæan vanities, to be freed wherefrom I was going thither, though neither they nor I knew it) that Symmachus, then prefect of the city, would send me, after examining me upon some set subject. To Milan I came, to Ambrose the Bishop, known to the whole world as among the best of men, Thy devout worshipper ; whose eloquent discourse did then plentifully dispense unto Thy people the fatness of Thy "wheat," the gladness of Thy "oil," and the sober inebriation of Thy "wine" (Ps. iv. 7, civ. 15). To him was I unknowing led by Thee, that by him I might

knowingly be led to Thee. That man of God received me as a father, and shewed me an Episcopal kindness on my coming. Thenceforth I began to love him, at first indeed not as a teacher of the truth, of which in Thy Church I wholly despaired, but as a person kind towards myself. And I listened diligently to him preaching to the people, not with that intent I ought, but, as it were, trying his eloquence, whether it answered the fame thereof, or flowed fuller or lower than was reported ; and I hung on his words attentively ; but with regard to the matter was but a careless and scornful bystander ; and I was delighted with the sweetness of his discourse, which, as far as concerns manner, was more learned, but less sparkling and flattering than that of Faustus. Of the matter, however, there was no comparison ; for the one was wandering amid Manichæan falsehoods, but the other most wholesomely taught salvation. But “salvation is far from sinners” (Ps. cxix. 155), such as I then stood before him ; and yet was I drawing nearer by little and little, and unconsciously.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

*After hearing the Bishop, he realises the power of the Catholic Faith, nevertheless he is sceptical after the manner of the later Academics.*

FOR though I took no pains to learn what he spake, but only to hear how he spake (for since I now despaired that any way lay open for man to approach Thee, that empty care, forsooth, alone remained), yet together with the words which I was enjoying, came also into my mind the things which I was rejecting. For I could not keep them apart. And while I opened my heart to admit “how eloquently he spake,” there also entered “how truly he spake ;” though but by degrees. For now for the first time these things had begun to appear to me capable of defence ; and the Catholic faith, in defence of which I had thought nothing could be advanced against Manichæan objectors, I now began to think might be maintained without shamelessness ; especially after I had heard one or two places of the Old Testament resolved, and often mystically, which when I understood literally, I was slain (*cf.* 2 Cor. iii. 6). Very many passages

then of those books having been explained spiritually, I began to condemn my own despair, for having believed that no answer at all could be given to such as hated and scoffed at the Law and the Prophets. I did not, however, yet perceive that the Catholic way was to be held, because it also could find learned defenders, who could abundantly, and by no means foolishly, answer objections ; nor that what I held was therefore to be condemned, because both sides were equally defensible. For so the Catholic side seemed not yet vanquished, though not as yet manifestly victorious.

Hereupon I earnestly bent my mind, to see if in any way I could by any certain proof convict the Manichæans of falsehood. Could I once have conceived a spiritual substance, all their devices would be cast down immediately, and be thrown off from my mind ; but I could not. Notwithstanding, concerning the frame of this world, and the whole of nature, which the senses of the flesh can reach to, as I more and more considered and compared things, I judged that most of the philosophers had held opinions far more probable. So then, after the manner of the Academics (as they are supposed) sceptical of every thing, and wavering between all, I settled so far, that the Manichæans must be abandoned ; not considering that even in that time of doubt I ought to continue in that sect, to which I was already beginning to prefer some of the philosophers : to which philosophers notwithstanding, because they were without the saving Name of Christ, I utterly refused to commit the cure of my sick soul. I determined therefore so long to be a Catechumen in the Catholic Church, to which I had been commended by my parents, till something certain should dawn upon me, whither I might direct my course.



## Book VJ.

HE IS NOW THIRTY YEARS OF AGE, AND UNDER THE TEACHING OF AMBROSE, PERCEIVED MORE AND MORE CLEARLY THE TRUTH OF CATHOLIC DOCTRINE, AND DETERMINED TO AMEND HIS LIFE.

### CHAPTER I.

*His mother followed him to Milan, and prophesied that she should not depart this life, until her son should have embraced the Catholic Faith.*

“MY hope from my youth,” where wert Thou to me, and whither hadst Thou gone? Hadst not Thou created me, and separated me from the beasts of the field, and fowls of the air? Thou hadst made me wiser, yet did I walk in darkness, and in slippery places, and sought Thee abroad out of myself, and found not the God of my heart; and had come into the depths of the sea, and distrusted and despaired of ever finding truth. My mother had now come to me, strong in her piety, following me over sea and land, and amid all perils safe by Thy protection. For throughout the dangers of the sea, she comforted the very mariners, by whom passengers unacquainted with the deep, are generally comforted when troubled, promising them a safe arrival, because Thou hadst by a vision promised this to her. She found me in grievous peril, through despair of ever finding truth. But when I had informed her, that I was now no longer a Manichæan, though not yet a Catholic Christian, she was not overjoyed, as though she had heard some unlooked for tidings; although she was now at rest concerning that part of my misery, for which she used to lament over me as one dead, though to be raised up again by Thee, and to “carry” me forth upon the “bier” of her thoughts, that Thou mightest say to the “son of the widow, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise; and he should revive, and begin to speak, and thou



shouldest deliver him to his mother" (S. Luke vii. 14, 15). Her heart then shook with no tumultuous exultation, when she heard that what she daily with tears desired of Thee, was already in so great part accomplished ; in that, though I had not yet attained unto the truth, I was already delivered from falsehood ; but now because she was confident that Thou, who hadst promised the whole, wouldest give what yet remained, most calmly, and with an heart full of confidence, she replied to me, "She believed in Christ, that before she departed out of this life, she should see me a faithful Catholic." Thus much to me. But to Thee, Fountain of mercies, poured she forth more copious prayers and tears, that Thou wouldest hasten Thy help, and lighten my darkness ; and she hastened the more eagerly to the Church, and hung upon the lips of Ambrose, for "the fountain of that water, which springeth up into everlasting life" (S. John iv. 14). But that man she loved "as an angel of God" (Gal. iv. 14), because she knew that by him I had been brought for a while to that present state of wavering doubt, through which she anticipated most confidently that I should pass from sickness unto health, after a sharper danger had intervened, as by that increase of fever, which physicians call "the crisis."

## CHAPTER II.

*She discontinues her habit of commemorating martyrs, on account of the prohibition of Ambrose.*

WHEN then my mother had once, as she was wont in Africa, brought to the memorials of the Saints, certain cakes, and bread and wine, and was forbidden by the door-keeper ; so soon as she knew that the Bishop had forbidden this, she so piously and obediently embraced his wishes, that I myself wondered how readily she censured her own practice, rather than dispute his prohibition. For wine-bibbing did not lay siege to her spirit, nor was love of wine, in her case, a stimulant to hate of truth, as it is with too many, both men and women, who loathe the praise of sobriety, as drunken men do a watered cup. But she, when she had brought her basket with the accustomed festival-food, to be but tasted by herself, and then given away, never



joined therewith more than one small cup of wine, diluted according to her own abstemious habits, from which she would partake to their honour. And if there were many memorials of the departed that were to be honoured in that manner, she would carry round that same one cup, to be used everywhere; and this, though not only made very watery, but unpleasantly heated, she would share by small sips, with those about her; for she sought there devotion, not pleasure. So soon, then, as she found that it was ordered by that famous preacher and pious prelate that this should not be done, even by those who would do it soberly, lest any occasion of excess might be given to the drunken; and because these commemorations were very similar to the superstitious Gentile rites of ancestor worship, she most willingly abstained from it, and learned to bear to the memorials of the martyrs, instead of a basket filled with the fruits of the earth, a breast filled with purer offerings: and she would give what she could to the poor, and thus would be celebrated the Communion of the Lord's Body, in imitation of whose passion the martyrs were slain and crowned. But yet it seems to me, O Lord, my God, and thus thinks my heart of it in Thy sight, that possibly my mother would not have yielded so readily to the restriction of this custom, had it been forbidden by another, whom she loved not as Ambrose, whom, for my salvation, she particularly loved; and he her again, for her most religious conversation, whereby in good works, so "fervent in spirit," she was constant at church; so that, when he saw me, he often burst forth into her praises; congratulating me, that I had such a mother; not knowing what a son she had in me, who doubted of all these things, and little thought that the way of life could be found out.

### CHAPTER III.

*On account of the pressure of business and study upon Ambrose. Augustine had few opportunities of consulting him concerning Holy Scripture.*

NOR did I yet groan in my prayers, that Thou wouldest help me; but my mind was bent on enquiry, and restless for controversy. And Ambrose himself, as the

world counts happy, I esteemed a happy man, for so many persons of position held him in honour; only his celibacy seemed to me burdensome. But what the hope he bore within, what the conflict against the temptations which beset his very excellence, what the consolation in adversities, and what the joys he tasted with that hidden mouth of the heart, when ruminating upon Thy Bread, I could know neither by conjecture nor by experience: nor did he know the tides of my feelings, or the abyss of my danger. For I could not ask of him, what I would as I would, being hindered by the crowds of people full of business, to whose infirmities he used to minister, from either speech or hearing from him; and when he was not surrounded by them, which was but a very little time, he was either refreshing his body with the sustenance absolutely necessary, or his mind with reading. But when he was reading, his eyes scanned the pages, and his heart explored the sense, but his voice and tongue were at rest. Ofttimes when we had come (for no one was forbidden to enter, nor was it the custom that a visitor should be announced to him), we saw him thus reading in silence, and never otherwise; and having long sat silent (for who could dare be troublesome to one so wrapt?) we used to depart, conjecturing, that in the small interval, which he obtained, free from the din of others' business, for the recruiting of his mind, he was loath to be taken off; and perchance he was afraid lest it might become necessary to explain to some keen and attentive listener anything obscurely expressed by the author he was reading; or to enter upon some discussion of more difficult questions; and if so he should spend his time, he would turn over fewer volumes than he desired, though the necessity of preserving his voice, which was very easily injured, was possibly the truer reason for his reading to himself. But with what intent soever he did it, certainly in such a man it was good.

But no full opportunity of consulting that holy oracle of Thine, his breast, was afforded me, unless some brief audience might suffice. But my anxieties required that he to whom they should be outpoured should have ample leisure, and never found it. I heard him indeed every Lord's day, "rightly handling the Word of truth" (2 Tim. ii. 15), among the people; and I was more and more convinced, that all the knots of those crafty calumnies, which

those our deceivers had tangled against the Divine Books, could be unravelled. But when I understood withal, that "man created by Thee, after Thine own image" (Gen. i. 27), was not so understood by Thy spiritual sons, whom of the Catholic Mother Thou hast regenerated through grace, as though they believed and conceived of Thee as contained within the form of a human body; although in what manner spiritual substance could exist, I could form not the slightest or most shadowy notion; even in my joy I reddened with the shame of having for so many years barked against, not the Catholic faith, but against the figments of my own carnal conceptions. For so rash and impious had I been, that what I ought to have said in the way of enquiry, I had said in the way of condemnation. For Thou, Most High, and most near; most secret, and most present; Who hast not limbs some larger, some smaller, but art wholly every where, and art nowhere comprehended in space; Thou art not indeed of bodily form, yet hast Thou made man after Thine own image; and behold, from head to foot he is contained in space.

#### CHAPTER IV.

*He discovered the falsehood of his own opinions, and committed to memory a saying of Ambrose.*

SINCE, then, I knew not how this Thy image could subsist, I should have knocked and enquired in what manner it was to be believed, not insultingly opposed it, as if it were believed as I imagined: therefore the more sharply the doubt, as to what I should hold for certain, gnawed my heart, the more ashamed I was, that so long deluded and deceived by the promise of certainties, I had with childish error and vehemence, prated of so many uncertainties as if they were certainties. For that they were falsehoods became clear to me later. However I was certain that they were uncertain, and that I had formerly accounted them certain, when with a blind contentiousness, I condemned Thy Catholic Church, which I had by this time discovered to teach, if not the truth, at any rate not to teach those things for which I had so seriously condemned her. So I was confounded and converted: and I joyed, O my God,

that the One Only Church, the body of Thine Only Son (wherein the name of Christ had been put upon me as an infant), had no taste for infantine conceits : and that in her sound doctrine she did not hold any tenet which should confine Thee, the Creator of all, in space, however great and large, yet bounded every where by the shape of human limbs.

I joyed also, that the old Scriptures of the law and the Prophets, were laid before me, not now to be perused with that eye to which before they seemed absurd, when I reviled Thy saints for thinking what indeed they never thought ; and with joy I heard Ambrose in his sermons to the people, oftentimes most diligently recommend as a rule, this saying, "The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life" (2 Cor. iii. 6) ; when, having drawn aside the mystic veil, he would open those passages spiritually, which according to the letter seemed to teach something unsound ; teaching herein nothing that offended me, though I did not yet know whether what he taught were true. For I withheld my heart from all assent, dreading a downfall : and came nearer being killed by the suspense. For I wished to be as assured of the things I saw not, as I was that seven and three are ten. For I was not so mad, as to think that even this could not be comprehended ; but I desired to have other things as clear as this, whether things corporeal, which were not present to my senses, or spiritual, whereof I knew not how to conceive, except corporeally. And by believing might I have been cured, that so my clearer mental vision might in some way be directed to Thy truth, which abideth always, and in no part faileth. But as it happens that one, who has tried a bad physician, fears to trust himself to a good one, so was it with the health of my soul, which could not be healed but by believing, and for fear of believing falsehoods, refused to be cured ; resisting Thy hands, who hast prepared the medicines of faith, and hast adapted them to the diseases of the whole world, and imparted to them so powerful an efficacy.



## CHAPTER V.

*Faith is the foundation of human life ; and man cannot discover the truth which the Sacred Scriptures reveal.*

ON this ground also, I now began to give the preference to the Catholic doctrine, and to perceive that it was more modest and straightforward in her to require belief in that which was not proved (whether it could be proved, or could perhaps not be proved to certain persons, or even not at all), than the other plan, of mocking credulity by the rash promise of knowledge ; and afterwards of imposing as articles of faith, many most fabulous and absurd things, because they could not be proved. Then Thou, O Lord, little by little with most tender and most merciful hand, touching and composing my heart, didst persuade me, by the consideration of the numberless things I believed though I did not see, and which were done while I was not present ; as for example so many events in the history of peoples ; so many accounts of places and of cities, which I had not seen ; so many things about my friends, so many concerning physicians, so many of this man and the other, which unless we should believe, we should do nothing at all in this life ; lastly, with how unshaken an assurance I believed, of what parents I was born, which I could not know, unless I had believed what I heard, considering all this, Thou didst persuade me, that not they who believed Thy Books (which Thou hast established in so great authority among almost all nations), but they who believed them not, were to be blamed ; and that they were not to be heard, who might chance to say to me, “ How knowest thou those Scriptures to have been imparted unto mankind by the Spirit of the one true and most truth saying God ? ” For this very thing was of all most to be believed, since no contentiousness of quibble and artifice throughout the abundant course of my reading amongst mutually contradictory philosophers could wring from me even an occasional failure to believe in Thy being, though of what Nature Thou wert I knew not, or that the administration of human affairs belongs to Thee.

This I believed, sometimes more strongly, more weakly other-whiles ; yet always I believed, both that Thou art, and



that Thou dost exercise a care for us ; though I was ignorant, both what was to be thought of Thy substance, and what way led or led back to Thee. Since then we were too weak by the light of reason to find out truth ; and for this very cause needed the authority of Holy Writ ; I had now begun to believe, that Thou wouldest never have given such excellency of authority to that Scripture throughout all lands, hadst Thou not willed that through it Thou shouldest be believed, and through it sought. For now the absurdity, which used to offend me in the Scripture, after I had heard many things from it satisfactorily expounded, I began to attribute to the depth of its mysteries, and its authority appeared to me the more venerable, and more worthy of religious credence, for the very reason that while it might easily be read by all, it reserved the majesty of its mystery within its profounder meaning, offering itself to all by the great plainness of its words, and the very humble style of its expression, yet demanding intense application of such as are not light of heart ; that so it might receive all in its broad bosom, and through narrow passages convey some few to Thee, yet many more than if it stood not aloft on such a height of authority, nor drew multitudes within the bosom of its holy humility. These things I thought on, and Thou wert with me ; I sighed and Thou didst hear me ; I wavered, and Thou didst guide me ; I wandered through the broad way of the world, and Thou didst not forsake me.

## CHAPTER VI.

*Concerning the origin and measure of true joy which he is brought to dwell on by the sight of a beggar's gaiety.*

I PANTED after honours, gains, marriage ; and Thou didst laugh me to scorn. In these desires I underwent most bitter distresses, Thou being the more gracious, the less Thou didst suffer aught to grow sweet to me, which was not Thyself. Behold my heart, O Lord, who wouldest that I should remember and confess this to Thee. Let now my soul cleave unto Thee, for Thou hast drawn it forth from the snares of death, that cling so close. How wretched was it ! and Thou didst cause the wound to feel

its smart, that forsaking all else, it might be converted unto Thee, who art above all, and without whom all things would be nothing ; that it might be converted and made whole. How miserable was I then, and how didst Thou deal with me, to make me feel my misery on that day, when I was preparing to recite a panegyric of the Emperor, wherein I was to utter many a lie, and lying, was to be applauded by those who knew I lied, and my heart was panting with these anxieties, and boiling with the feverishness of consuming thoughts. For, passing through one of the streets of Milan, I noticed a poor beggar, who I suppose had just had a good meal, joking and joyous : and I sighed, and spoke to the friends around me, of the many sorrows of our own frenzies, because by all such efforts of ours, as I was then toiling at, dragging with me a burden of wretchedness beneath the goad of my desires, and increasing it by dragging it, we sought for nothing, except to arrive at that unanxious joy, wherein that beggar had forestalled us, who should never perchance attain thereto. For what he had obtained by means of a few begged pence, for that same thing I was scheming by many weariful turnings and twistings ; for the joy forsooth of temporal happiness. He indeed had not the true joy ; but yet I with those my ambitious designs was seeking one far less true. And certainly he was joyous, I anxious ; he free from care, I full of fear. But should any ask me, “ whether I would prefer to be merry or to be fearful ? ” I would answer “ to be merry.” Again, if he asked had I rather be such as he was, or what I then was myself ? I should choose to be myself, though worn with cares and fears ; but from perversity ; for could it be so of a truth ? For I ought not to prefer myself to him, because I was more learned, seeing I had no joy therein, but was seeking to please men by it ; not even to teach them ; but only to please them. Wherefore also Thou didst break my bones with the rod of Thy discipline :

Away with those then from my soul, who say to her, “ The difference lies in the source of one’s joy. The beggar’s joy lay in winebibbing ; but Thou wouldest derive Thine from glory.” What glory, Lord ? That which is not in Thee. For even as his was no true joy, so was that no true glory : and it upturned my mind even more. He that very night should digest his drunkenness ; but I

had slept and risen again with mine, and was to sleep again, and again to rise with it, how many days, Thou, God, knowest. But there "does lie a difference in the source of one's joy." I know it, and the joy of a faithful hope is immeasurably distant from that vanity, but of us two he then distanced me. For in very truth he was the happier; not only because he was thoroughly drenched in mirth, while my very life was torn out of me with anxieties: but also he, by well-wishing folk had gotten his wine; whilst I, by lying, was seeking to feed my pride. Much to this effect said I then to my friends: and I often noticed in them how it fared with me; and I found it went ill with me, and grieved, and doubled that very ill; and if any prosperity smiled on me, I was loath to catch at it, for almost before I had hold of it, it flew away.

## CHAPTER VII.

*He reforms Alypius, his friend, who had been captivated by a foolish passion for the shows of the circus.*

THESE things we, who were living as friends together, bemoaned together, but chiefly and most familiarly I used to discuss them with Alypius and Nebridius, of whom Alypius was a native of the same town as myself, where his parents were among the leading townsmen; but he was younger than I. For he had studied under me, both when I first lectured in our town, and afterwards at Carthage, and he loved me much, because I seemed to him kind, and learned; and I him, for his great natural inclination to virtue, which was eminent enough in one of no great age. Yet the whirlpool of the habits of the Carthaginians, who are feverishly addicted to trifling shows, had sucked him into a mad passion for the Circus. But while he was miserably whirled about therein, and I, as a professor of rhetoric there, held a public school, he did not as yet frequent my lectures, on account of some dissension, which had arisen between his father and me; and I had discovered that he had a deadly fondness for the circus; and I was deeply grieved that he seemed likely to waste his great promise, or even had already done so. Yet had I no

means of advising or with a sort of constraint reclaiming him, either by the kindness of a friend, or the authority of a master. For I supposed that he thought of me as did his father ; but he did not. Therefore disregarding his father's wish in this matter, he began to greet me, come sometimes into my lecture-room, hear a little, and be gone.

However it slipped from my memory to warn him against destroying so excellent a natural talent, with a blind and headlong eagerness for vain sports. But Thou, O Lord, who dost control the courses of all whom Thou hast created, wast not forgetful that he should one day be amongst Thy children a Priest celebrant of Thy sacrament : and that his amendment might plainly be attributed to Thyself, Thou didst effect it through me, though I thought not of it. For as one day I sat in my accustomed place, with my scholars before me, he entered, greeted me, sat down, and applied his mind to what was being treated of. I had by chance a passage in hand, and while I was commenting on it, an apt allusion to the Circensian games occurred to me, as likely to make what I would convey pleasanter and plainer, seasoned with biting mockery of those whom that madness had enthralled ; God, Thou knowest, that I then thought not of curing Alypius of that infection. But he took it wholly to himself, and thought that I said it entirely on his account. And what another might have taken as a cause of quarrel with me, the right-minded lad took as a ground of quarrel with himself, and liked me all the more warmly. For Thou hadst said long ago, and put it into Thy book, " Rebuke a wise man and he will love thee " (Prov. ix. 8). But I had not rebuked him, but Thou, who employest all, whether they know it or not, according to the design Thou hast known (and that design is righteous), didst bring forth coals of fire from my heart and tongue, that Thou mightest with a good hope kindle his languishing mind and heal it. Let him be silent in Thy praises, who considers not Thy mercies, which confess unto Thee out of my inmost soul. For he upon that speech, burst out of that pit so deep, wherein he was wilfully plunged, and was blinded with its wretched pastimes ; and he shook his mind with a strong self-command ; and all the contaminations of the circus fell from him, nor came he again thither. Upon this, he prevailed with his unwilling father, that he might be my scholar.



He yielded and consented. And Alypius, beginning to attend my lectures again, was with me involved in superstition, loving in the Manichæans that show of continency, which he supposed true and genuine. Whereas it was foolish and deceptive, lying in wait for precious souls, as yet unable to climb the steep of virtue, and easy to be beguiled with the appearance of virtue, though but shadowy and feigned.

## CHAPTER VIII.

*The same Alypius is dragged by companions at Rome to the Colisseum, and is delighted with the gladiatorial games.*

HE, in pursuit of the secular avocation, which had been glowingly depicted to him by his parents, had gone before me to Rome, to study law, and there he was carried away incredibly with an incredible eagerness after the shows of gladiators. For at a time when he loathed and detested such things, certain of his friends and fellow-students, whom he chanced to meet on their return from luncheon, dragged him with playful violence, though vehemently resisting and refusing, into the Amphitheatre, during these cruel and deadly shows. "If," said he, "you drag my body to that place, and there set me, can you force me also to fasten my mind or my eyes upon those spectacles? So I will be present though absent, and thus shall overcome both you and them." They hearing this, nevertheless dragged him along with them, anxious perhaps to find out whether he could go through with it. When they were come thither, and had taken their places as they could, the whole place was boiling with the most savage delight. But he, closing the doors of his eyes, forbade his mind to roam amongst such evils, and would he had stopped his ears also! For at a certain accident in the fight, a mighty shout from the whole people struck violently upon him, and vanquished by curiosity, and fancying himself steeled to despise and overcome anything he might see, whatever it might be, he opened his eyes, and was stricken with a deeper wound in his soul, than the other, whom he desired to behold, was in his body; and he fell more miserably than he, upon whose fall that mighty shout was raised, which entered through his ears, and unlocked his



eyes, to make way for the striking and beating down of a soul bold rather than brave, and the weaker, in that it had presumed on itself, when it ought to have relied on Thee. For so soon as he saw that blood, he therewith drank down savageness; nor turned away, but fixed his gaze, and drank in fury, unawares, and delighted in the wickedness of the conflict, and was intoxicated with the bloody pastime. Nor was he now the man he came, but one of the crowd to which he had come, and a very mate of theirs that brought him thither. Why say more? He beheld, shouted, blazed with excitement, and carried thence with him an infatuation which should goad him to return not only with them who first drew him thither, but also before them, yea and to draw in others. Yet thence didst Thou with a most strong and most merciful hand pluck him, and didst teach him to put his trust not in himself, but in Thee. But this was long afterwards.

#### CHAPTER IX.

*Alypius, though innocent, was apprehended as a thief, but set free by the skill of a certain architect.*

BUT this was already being laid up in his memory to be a medicine hereafter; and another thing also, which occurred while he was still a student, attending my lectures at Carthage. For when he was conning over at mid-day in the market-place, as is customary among students, what he was going to recite, Thou didst suffer him to be apprehended by the market-keepers as a thief; for no other reason, I suppose, didst Thou, our God, suffer it, but that he, who was hereafter to prove so great a man, should already begin to learn, that in judging of causes, one man ought not readily to condemn another from a headlong credulity. For as he was walking up and down by himself before the judgment seat, with his tablets and pen, lo, a young man, one of the students, the real thief, privily bringing a hatchet, got in, unperceived by Alypius, as far as the leaden lattices, which project over the silversmiths' quarter, and began to cut away the lead. But the noise of the hatchet being heard, the silversmiths who were underneath muttered together about it, and sent to apprehend whom-

ever they should find. As soon as he heard their voices, he dropped his hatchet and made off, fearful of being caught with it. Alypius now, who had not seen him enter, perceived his departure, and saw too how hurriedly he went ; and curious to ascertain the reason, went into the place, and stood there wondering and looking at the hatchet he found there ; when behold, those that had been sent, find him alone with the hatchet in his hand, the noise of which had startled and brought them thither. They seize him, drag him away, and a crowd of market-place tenants having collected, boast of having captured a palpable thief, and so he was being led away to be taken before the judge.

But so far was his instruction to go. For forthwith, O Lord, Thou didst come to the rescue of his innocence, whereof Thou alone wert witness. For as he was being led either to prison or to punishment, a certain architect met them, who had the chief charge of the public buildings. They were especially glad to meet him, for they were apt to fall under his suspicion of stealing goods which were lost out of the market-place, and now at length he might, as they thought, make certain who really did these things. But this man had often seen Alypius at a certain Senator's house, upon whom he used to call, and recognising him immediately, took him aside by the hand, and enquiring the occasion of so great a misfortune, heard what had happened ; and bade all present, amid much uproar and threats, to go with him. So they came to the house of the young man, who had done the deed. There, before the door, was a boy so young, as to be likely, not suspecting any danger for his master, to disclose the whole. For he had attended his master to the market-place. Directly Alypius recognised him, he told the architect ; and he, shewing the hatchet to the boy, asked him "Whose that was?" "Ours," quoth he presently : and upon further questioning, disclosed everything. So the charge was shifted to that household, to the confusion of the crowds, which had already begun to exult over Alypius : and the future minister of Thy word, and examiner of many causes in Thy Church, went away the wiser and more experienced.

## CHAPTER X.

*The extraordinary integrity of Alypius in judicial matters ; and the firm friendship between Nebridius and Augustine.*

HIM then I had found at Rome, and he clung to me by a most strong tie, and went with me to Milan, both that he might not leave me, and might practise something of the law he had studied, more to please his parents, than himself. There he had thrice sat as Assessor with an integrity which surprised others, while he was even more surprised at those who could prefer gold to honesty. His character was tried besides, not only with the bait of covetousness, but with the goad of fear. At Rome he was Assessor to the count of the Italian Treasury. There was at that time a very powerful senator, to whom many were attached by favours, and many cringed for fear. He, by his usual manner of influence, wanted permission for something which by the laws was not permitted. Alypius resisted it: a bribe was promised; with all his heart he scorned it: threats were held out; he trampled upon them to everybody's surprise at so rare a display of spirit, which neither desired the friendship, nor feared the enmity of one so great and of such general notoriety for innumerable means of helping or hurting another. And the very Judge, whose councillor Alypius was, although himself also opposed to it, yet did not openly refuse, but put the matter off upon Alypius, alleging that he would not allow him to do it: for in truth had the Judge done it, Alypius would have dissented. By his devotion to literature only, he was almost persuaded, that he might have books copied for him at Prætorian prices; but consulting justice, he altered his deliberation for the better; judging that the equity, by which he was restrained, was more advantageous than the privilege, by which he was permitted. This is a little matter; "but he that is faithful in little, is faithful also in much." Nor can that anyhow be void, which proceeded out of the mouth of Thy Truth; "If ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous Mammon, who will commit to your trust true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?" (S. Luke xvi. 10-12). Such then was he, who at that time clung to

me, and with me wavered in purpose, what manner of life should be pursued.

Nebridius also, who having left his native place, near Carthage, and Carthage itself, which he had greatly frequented, leaving his excellent paternal estate and house, and his mother too, who would not follow him, had come to Milan, for no other reason, but that with me he might live in a most ardent search after truth and wisdom. He mingled with ours' his sighs and perplexities, an ardent seeker after the blessed life, and a most acute examiner of the most difficult questions. Thus were there the mouths of three who in their needs were sighing forth their wants one to another, and "waiting upon Thee that Thou mightest give them their meat in due season" (Ps. cxlv. 15). And in all the bitterness, which by Thy mercy followed our worldly doings, as we looked towards the end, why we should suffer all this, darkness met us; and we turned away groaning, and saying, "How long shall these things be?" This too we often said; and so saying forsook them not, for as yet there dawned nothing certain, which, when these were forsaken, we might grasp.

## CHAPTER XI.

*Troubled by most serious perplexities, Augustine deliberates upon beginning a new life.*

AND I, greatly troubled and recalling things, most wondered at the length of time from that my nineteenth year, wherein I had begun to kindle with the desire of wisdom, determining when I had found her, to abandon all the empty hopes and lying fantasies of vain desires. And lo, I was now in my thirtieth year, sticking in the same mire, greedy of enjoying things present, which passed away and wasted my soul; while I said to myself, "To-morrow I shall find it; it will appear clearly, and I will lay hold of it; lo, Faustus will come, and make every thing plain! O you great men, ye Academicians, is it true then, that no thing can be grasped with certainty for the guidance of our life? Nay, let us search the more diligently, and let us not despair. For, look you, the things are no longer



absurd in the church's books, which used to seem absurd, for they can be differently understood, and with honesty. I will plant my feet in the very steps, in which in my boyhood my parents set me, until the clear truth be found out. But where shall it be sought or when? Ambrose has no leisure; we have no leisure to read; where shall we find even the books? Whence, or when procure them? from whom borrow them? Let set times be fixed, let certain hours be set apart for the health of our soul. Great hope has dawned; the Catholic Faith teaches not what we used to think, and in our vanity allege against it: her instructed members hold it profane, to believe that God is comprehended within the form of a human body; and do we doubt to "knock," that the rest "may be opened"? Our scholars fill the hours of the forenoon; what do we during the rest? Why not this? But when then can we pay our respects to our more influential friends, of whose good offices we have need? When prepare what our students buy? When refresh ourselves, seeking mental relaxation from the strain of our cares?

"Perish every thing, let us dismiss these empty vanities, and devote ourselves wholly to the seeking after truth! Life is wretched, death uncertain; if it steals upon us suddenly, how shall we depart hence? and where shall we learn what here we have neglected? and shall we not rather pay the penalty of this negligence? What, if death itself cut off and end all care and feeling? This also must be inquired into. But God forbid that so it should be! It is no vain and empty thing, that the excellent dignity of the authority of the Christian Faith hath so overspread the whole world. Never would such and so great things be by God wrought for us, if with the death of the body, the life of the soul should be destroyed. Why then do we delay to abandon worldly ambition, and to give ourselves wholly to seeking after God and the blessed life? But wait! Even those things are pleasant; they have a not small sweetness of their own. Our pursuit of them must not be abandoned without consideration, for it were base to return to them again. See, it is no great matter now to obtain some station, and then what should we more wish for? We have store of powerful friends; if nothing else offer, and we be in much haste, at least a presidentship may be given us: and a wife



with some money, that she increase not our charges : and this shall be the bound of desire. Many great men, and most worthy of imitation, have given themselves to the study of wisdom in the state of marriage."

While I went over these things, and these winds shifted and drove my heart this way and that, time passed on, but I delayed my conversion to the Lord ; and from day to day deferred to live in Thee, and deferred not daily to die in myself. Loving the blessed life, I feared it in its own abode, and sought it, by fleeing from it. I thought I should be too miserable if deprived of a woman's embraces ; and of the medicine of Thy mercy to cure that infirmity I thought not, not having tried it ; and I thought that continency was attainable by our own strength, and was conscious that I had not such strength, being so foolish as not to know what is written, "None can be continent unless Thou give it" (Wisd. viii. 21). And certainly Thou wouldest have given it, if with inward groanings I had knocked at Thine ears, and with a firm faith should cast my care on thee.

## CHAPTER XII.

*A discussion with Alypius concerning marriage and celibacy.*

ALYPIUS indeed kept me from marrying ; arguing that by no possibility could we with undisturbed leisure continue to live together in the love of wisdom, as we had long desired, if I were to do so. For himself was even then in this respect most chaste, so that it was wonderful ; and that the more, since in the outset of his youth he had made trial of such pleasures, but had not clung to them, rather had lamented and despised them : and up to now was living in absolute continence. But I opposed him with the examples of those, who in the state of marriage had cherished wisdom, and had pleased God, and retained their friends, and loved them faithfully. Of whose greatness of spirit I truly came far short ; and bound with the disease of the flesh, and its deadly sweetness, drew along my chain, dreading to be loosed, and rejecting the words of him that counselled well, as though my wound were galled, and a hand sought to loose my chain. Moreover, by me

did the serpent speak unto Alypius himself, and by my tongue wove and scattered in his path snares of pleasure wherein his virtuous and unfettered feet might be entangled.

For when he would wonder that I, whom he esteemed not slightly, should stick so fast in the birdlime of that pleasure, as to protest so oft as we discussed it together, that I could by no means lead a single life; and urged in my defence when I saw him wonder, that there was great difference between his momentary and stolen experiences, which now he could hardly even remember, and could therefore without effort easily despise, and my habitual pleasures, whereto if but the honourable name of marriage were added, he ought not to wonder why I could not condemn that course; he began also to desire to be married; not that he was overcome by the lust of such pleasure, but out of curiosity. For he would fain know, he said, what that should be, without which my life, to him so pleasing, would seem to me not life, but punishment. For his mind, free from that chain, was amazed at my thralldom; and through that amazement was going on to a desire of trying it, thence to the trial itself, and thence perhaps to sink into that thralldom whereat he wondered, since he was willing to "make a covenant with death" (Isaiah xxviii. 15), and "he that loves danger, shall fall into it" (Ecclus. iii. 26). For whatever honour there be in the duty of ordering well the married life, and bringing up children, influenced neither of us, even slightly. But me for the most part the habit of satisfying an insatiable appetite tormented, while it held me captive; him, an admiring wonder was leading into captivity. So were we, until Thou, O Most High, not forsaking our clay, moved with mercy at our misery, didst come to our help, in wonderful and secret ways.

### CHAPTER XIII.

*He is advised by his mother to marry; and found a maiden who pleased him.*

AND I was constantly being urged to marry. Now I went a-wooing; now a betrothal was made, chiefly through my mother's effort, in order that as soon as I was

married the saving Baptism might cleanse me, for which she rejoiced that I was being daily fitted, and saw that her prayers and Thy Promises were receiving fulfilment in my faith. But when both at my request and her own longing, with strong cries of heart she daily begged of Thee, that Thou wouldest by a vision discover unto her something concerning my future marriage ; Thou never wouldest. She saw indeed certain vain and fantastic things, such as the working of the human spirit, preoccupied with this matter, would compound ; and related them to me, not with that confidence she used to have when Thou hadst revealed anything to her, but slighting them. For she said she could discern, by a certain indescribable savour, which she could not explain in words, a difference between Thy revelation, and her soul's own dreams. So I was urged, and a maiden wooed, who was by two years too young to marry ; and since she pleased me, I was to wait for her.

## CHAPTER XIV.

*A plan of living in community with his friends soon comes to naught.*

AND many of us friends conferring about, and detesting the turbulent cares of human life, had debated and now almost resolved on living apart from bustle and business ; and this leisure we were to compass by bringing into a common fund whatever we might be able to procure, and by establishing one household out of all ; so that through the sincerity of our friendship, this should not belong to one, that to another ; but the whole thus derived from all, should as a whole belong to each, and all to all. We thought there might be some ten persons in this society ; some of whom were very rich, especially Romanianus, our fellow townsman, from childhood a very familiar friend of mine, whom the grievous perplexities of his affairs had at that time brought up to court. He was most urgent for this project, and had great weight in pressing it, because his ample fortune far exceeded that of any of the rest. And we had arranged that two of us annually, as a kind of officials, should provide all things necessary, the rest being undisturbed. But when we began to consider whether the

wives, which some of us already had, others hoped to have, would allow this, all that plan, which we were so well shaping, fell to pieces in our hands, was utterly dashed and cast aside. Thence we betook us to sighs, and groans, and our steps to follow the "broad and beaten ways" (S. Matt. vii. 13) of the world, for many thoughts were in our heart. "But Thy counsel standeth for ever" (Ps. xxxiii. 11). Out of which counsel Thou didst deride ours, and didst prepare Thine own; purposing to "give us meat in due season, and to open Thy hand, and to fill our souls with benediction" (Ps. cxlv. 15, 16).

## CHAPTER XV.

*He dismisses his mistress, but obtains another.*

MEANWHILE my sins were being multiplied, and my mistress being torn from my side as a hindrance to my marriage, my heart which clave unto her was torn and wounded and bleeding. And she returned to Africa, vowing unto Thee never to know any other man, leaving with me my son by her. But unhappy I, who could not imitate a very woman, impatient of delay, inasmuch as not till after two years was I to obtain her I wooed, not being so much a lover of marriage, as a slave to lust, procured another, though no wife, that so by the convoy of a continuous custom, the disease of my soul undiminished or even increased, might be sustained and carried on into the realm of matrimony. Nor was that my wound cured, which had been made by the cutting away of the former, but after inflammation and most acute pain, it mortified, and my pains became benumbed, but more desperate.

## CHAPTER XVI.

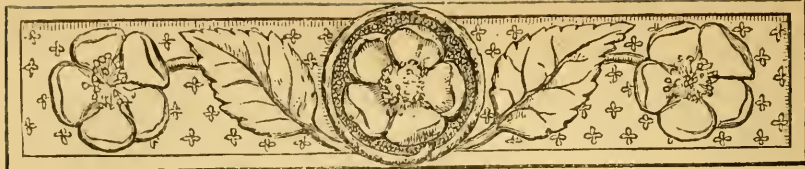
*The fear of death and judgment weighed on him, owing to his belief in the immortality of the soul.*

TO Thee be praise, to Thee glory, Thou fount of mercies, I was becoming more miserable, and Thou nearer. Thy right hand was continually ready to pluck me out of

the mire, and to “wash me thoroughly,” and I knew it not; nor did anything call me back from a yet deeper gulf of carnal pleasures, but the fear of death, and of Thy judgment to come; which throughout all my changes of opinion, never entirely departed from my breast. And in my disputes with my friends Alypius and Nebridius of the nature of good and evil, I used to hold that Epicurus would, to my judgment, have won the palm, had I not believed, that after death there remained a life of the soul, and durations of requitals, which Epicurus refused to believe. And I asked “were we immortal, and to live in perpetual bodily pleasure, without fear of losing it, why should we not be happy, or what else should we seek?” not knowing that great misery was involved in this very thing, that, being thus sunk and blinded, I could not discern that light of virtue and beauty, which is to be embraced for its own sake, which the eye of flesh cannot see, and is seen by the inner man. Nor did I, unhappy, consider from what source it sprung, that even on these things, foul as they were, I found pleasure in conferring with my friends, nor could I, even according to the notions I then had of happiness, be happy without friends, in whatever abundance of carnal indulgence. And yet these friends I loved for themselves only, and I felt that I was beloved of them again for myself only.

O crooked paths! Woe to the audacious soul, which hoped, by forsaking Thee, to gain some better thing! Turned it hath, and turned again, upon back, sides, and belly, yet all was hard. For Thou alone art rest. And behold, Thou art at hand, and deliverest us from our wretched wanderings, and dost set us in Thy Life, and dost comfort us, and say, “Run; I will carry you; yea I will bring you to the end; and there also will I carry you.”





## Book V33.

HE RECALLS THE BEGINNING OF HIS MANHOOD, TO WIT THE THIRTY-FIRST YEAR OF HIS AGE : IN WHICH HAVING ABANDONED HIS MOST SERIOUS ERRORS CONCERNING THE NATURE OF GOD, AND THE ORIGIN OF EVIL, AND HAVING MADE A MORE ACCURATE STUDY OF THE SACRED SCRIPTURES, HE ATTAINS AT LAST TO A TRUE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD, THOUGH NOT YET RIGHTLY UNDERSTANDING THE INCARNATION OF JESUS CHRIST.

### CHAPTER I.

*His conception of God, not exactly in the form of a human body, but as a corporeal substance, diffused through space.*

BY this time my evil and wicked youth was dead and gone ; and I was entering upon manhood ; growing baser in vanity, as older in years. But although I could not imagine any substance, but such as is wont to be seen with these eyes, I thought not of Thee, O God, under the form of a human body. Since I began to hear aught of wisdom, I always avoided this ; and rejoiced to have found the same in the faith of our spiritual mother, Thy Catholic Church. But what else to conceive Thee I knew not. And I, a man, and such a man, sought to conceive of Thee the sovereign, and only and true God ; and I did in my inmost soul believe that Thou wert incorruptible, and inviolable, and unchangeable, though not knowing whence or how. For I saw plainly and was sure, that that which can be corrupted, must be inferior to that which cannot ; that which cannot be injured, I unhesitatingly placed above that which is capable of injury ; and that which suffers no change is better than that which can be changed. My heart passionately cried out against all my phantasms, and with this one blow I sought to beat away from the eye of my mind all that unclean troop which buzzed around it. And lo, being

scarce put off, in the twinkling of an eye they gathered again thick about me, flew against my face, and beclouded it ; so that though not under the form of the human body, yet was I constrained to conceive of Thee as something corporeal, throughout space, whether infused into the world, or diffused through infinity outside the world, yea, even of that incorruptible, and inviolable, and unchangeable substance, which I judged better than anything corruptible, violable, or changeable. Because whatever I severed from the idea of dimensions, seemed to me to be nothing at all ; but absolutely nothing, not even an empty space, as if some body were taken away from it, and the space should remain, emptied of every substance, both earthly, watery, aerial, and celestial, but yet should remain an empty space, as though it were a spacious nothing.

I then being thus crass of heart, nor clear even to myself, whatsoever was not extended over certain spaces, nor diffused, nor condensed, nor swelled out, or did not or could not receive some of these dimensions, I thought to be absolutely nothing. For my heart did then range among such images, as the forms among which my eyes are still wont to range ; and I did not perceive that the very mental operation, by which I formed these images, was a thing of a different sort from the images, and could not have formed them, had not itself been something great. So also did I endeavour to conceive of Thee, Life of my life, as vast, through infinite spaces on every side penetrating the whole mass of the universe, and beyond it, every way, through unmeasurable boundless spaces ; so that the earth should have Thee, the heaven have Thee, all things have Thee, and they be bounded in Thee, and Thou bounded nowhere. For just as the substance of this air, which is above the earth, offers no such resistance to the light of the sun, that it cannot pass through it, penetrating it, not by rending or cutting it, but by filling it wholly : so I thought the substance not of heaven, air, and sea only, but of the earth too, was pervaded by Thee, so that in all its parts, the greatest as the smallest, it was penetrable to receive Thy presence, ordering, by a secret inspiration within and without, all things which Thou hast created. Such was my theory, for I could conceive no other ; but it was false. For in this way a greater part of the earth would contain a greater portion of Thee, and a less,

a lesser : and all things should in such sort be full of Thee, that the body of an elephant should contain more of Thee than that of a sparrow, in proportion to its greater size, and filling a larger space ; and thus shouldest Thou make the several portions of Thyself present unto the several portions of the world, piecemeal, large in the large, little in the little. But such art not Thou. But not as yet hadst Thou enlightened my darkness.

## CHAPTER II.

*An argument of Nebridius against the Manichæans, upon the question,  
“ whether God be or be not corruptible.”*

**I**T was enough for me, Lord, to allege against those deceived deceivers, and dumb praters, since not from them did Thy word sound ; it was surely enough, which long ago, while we were yet at Carthage, Nebridius used to propound, at which all we that heard it, were staggered ; “ That indescribable nation of darkness, which they are wont to set as an opposing mass, over against Thee, what could it have done unto Thee, hadst Thou refused to fight with it ? For, if it should be answered, ‘ it would have done Thee some hurt,’ then Thou wouldest be violable, and corruptible ; but if ‘ it could do Thee no hurt,’ then was no cause assigned for Thy fighting with it ; and fighting in such wise, as that a certain portion and member of Thee, even the offspring of Thy very Substance, should be mingled with opposed powers, and natures not created by Thee, and be by them so far corrupted and changed for the worse, as to be turned from blessedness into misery, and to need help, whereby it might be rescued and purified ; and that this was the soul, which Thy Word might aid ; being free might aid the enslaved, pure the defiled, sound the corrupted ; that Word itself being still corruptible, because It was of one and the same Substance. So then, should they say that Thou, whatsoever Thou art, that is, Thy Substance whereby Thou art, art incorruptible, then were all these sayings false and execrable ; but if corruptible, then the statement itself is false, and at the very first utterance to be abhorred.” This argument then of Nebridius

sufficed against those, who deserved wholly to be vomited out of the overcharged stomach; for they had no escape, without horrible blasphemy of heart and tongue, thus thinking and speaking of Thee.

## CHAPTER III.

*That the freedom of the will is the cause of evil.*

BUT I also as yet, although I held and was firmly persuaded, that Thou our Lord the true God, who madest not only our souls, but our bodies, and not only our souls and bodies, but all beings, and all things, wert undefilable and unalterable, and in no degree mutable; yet I did not hold that the cause of evil was explained, and disentangled. And yet whatever it were, I perceived it was in such wise to be sought out, as should not constrain me to believe the unchangeable God to be changeable, lest I should become that evil for which I was seeking. I sought it out then, thus far free from anxiety, certain of the untruth of what these held, from whom I shrunk with my whole heart: for I saw, that through enquiring the origin of evil, they were filled with evil, in that they preferred to think that Thy substance did suffer evil rather than that their own did commit it.

And I strained to perceive what I now heard, that free-will was the cause of our doing ill, and Thy just judgment of our suffering ill; but I was not able clearly to discern it. So then endeavouring to draw my soul's vision out of that deep pit, I was again plunged therein, and endeavouring often, I was plunged back again and again. But it lifted me a little towards Thy Light, to know that I had a will, as certainly as that I had life. So then when I did or did not will anything, I was as sure as possible that none other than myself did or did not will it, and I came to the point of noticing that here lay the cause of my sin. But what I did against my will, I saw that I suffered rather than did, and I judged not to be my fault, but my punishment; whereby however, holding Thee to be just, I speedily confessed myself to be not unjustly punished. But again I said, Who made me? Did not my God, who is not only good, but



goodness itself? Whence then comes it that I choose the evil and refuse the good, that so a reason should be found for my just punishment? Who set this in me, and implanted in me this root of bitterness, seeing I was wholly formed by my most sweet God? If the devil were the author, whence is that same devil? And if he also by his own perverse will, of a good angel became a devil, whence, again, came in him that evil will, whereby he became a devil, since his whole angelhood was made good by the Most Good Creator? By these thoughts I was again thrust down and suffocated; yet not so brought down to that hell of error, where no man confesseth unto Thee, as to think rather that Thou dost suffer ill, than that man doth it.

#### CHAPTER IV.

*That God is not corruptible: or He would cease to be God.*

FOR I was in such wise striving to find out the rest, as one who had already found, that the incorruptible must needs be better than the corruptible: and Thee therefore, whatsoever Thou wert, I confessed to be incorruptible. For never soul was, nor shall be, able to conceive of any thing better than Thee, who art the sovereign and the chiefest good. But since most truly and certainly, the incorruptible is preferable to the corruptible, as I did now prefer it, then, unless Thou wert incorruptible, I could in thought have arrived at something which was better than my God. Where then I saw the incorruptible to be preferable to the corruptible, there ought I to seek for Thee, and there observe "whence evil was;" that is, whence is that corruption, by which Thy substance can by no means be injured. For in absolutely no way at all doth corruption injure our God; by no will, by no necessity, by no unlooked-for chance; because He is God, and what He wills is good, and Himself is that good. But to be corrupted is not good. Nor art Thou against Thy will constrained to any thing, since Thy will is not greater than Thy power. For it could only be greater, if Thou Thyself wert greater than Thyself; for the will and power of God is God Himself. And what can be unforeseen to Thee, who



knowest all things? and there is no nature, except because Thou knowest it. And what should we more say, "why that substance which God is, should not be corruptible," seeing that if it were so, it should cease to be God?

## CHAPTER V.

*Questions concerning the relation of evil to God: since if He be the sovereign good, He cannot be the cause of evil.*

AND I sought, "whence is evil," and sought in an evil way; and saw not the evil in my very search. I set now before the sight of my spirit, the whole creation, whatsoever is visible in it, such as earth, and sea, and air, and stars, and trees, and mortal creatures; and whatsoever in it is invisible, as the firmament of heaven, and besides all the angels and all the spiritual things thereof. But these also, as though they were bodies, did my imagination arrange in such and such places; and I made one great mass of Thy creation, distinguished as to the kinds of bodies; some, real bodies, some, what myself had feigned for spirits. And this mass I made huge, not as it was, which I could not know, but as large as I chose, yet bounded on every side; but Thee, O Lord, I imagined on every part surrounding and penetrating it, but in every direction infinite: as if there were a sea, every where, and on every side, through unmeasured space, one only infinite sea, and it contained within it some sponge, huge, but finite; that sponge must needs, in all its parts, be filled from that unmeasured sea: so I imagined Thy finite creation full of Thee, the Infinite; and I said, Behold God, and behold what God hath created; and God is good, yea, most mightily and incomparably better than all these: but yet He, the Good, created them good; and see how doth He surround and fill them. Where is evil then, and whence, and how crept it in hither? What is its root, and what its seed? Or hath it no being? Why then do we fear and shun what hath no existence? Even if we fear it idly, yet surely that very fear is evil, whereby the soul is thus idly goaded and tormented; and so much a greater evil, as there is nothing to fear, and yet we do fear. Therefore there is either evil, which we fear,

or this is itself the evil, namely, that we fear. Whence is it then? seeing God hath made all these things, and He being good hath made them good. He indeed, the greater and chiefest Good, hath created these lesser goods; still both Creator and created, all are good. Whence is evil? Or, was there some evil matter out of which He made these things, and did He give it form and order, and yet leave in it something which He did not convert into good? Why so then? Had He no might to turn and change the whole, so that no evil should remain in it, seeing He is Almighty? Lastly, why would He make any thing at all of it, and not rather by the same Almighty power cause it entirely to cease to exist? Or, could it really exist against His will? Or if it were from eternity, why suffered He it so to be for infinite spaces of times past, and yet chose so long after to make something out of it? Or if He now suddenly chose to do something, an Almighty being would be more likely to do this; to wit, to cause this evil matter to cease to be, and that He only should exist, the very sovereign and Infinite Good; or if it was not good that He who was good, should not also frame and create something that were good, then, that evil matter being taken away and brought to nothing, He might establish good matter, whereof to create all things. For He should not be Almighty, if He could not create something good except by the assistance of that matter which Himself had not created. These thoughts I turned over in my miserable heart, weighed down with most corrosive anxieties, and a dread of death, ere yet I should have found the truth; yet was the faith of Thy Christ our Lord and Saviour, professed in the Church Catholic, firmly fixed in my heart, in many points, indeed, as yet without form, and vacillating beyond the strict limit of doctrine; yet did not my mind utterly leave it, but rather daily drank in more and more of it.

## CHAPTER VI.

*He rejects astrological divinations.*

BY this time also I had rejected the lying divinations and impious ravings of the astrologers. Let Thine own mercies, out of my very inmost soul, confess unto

Thee for this also, O my God. For Thou, Thou altogether (for who else calls us back from the death of all errors, save the Life which knows not death, and the Wisdom which needing no light enlightens the minds that need it, by which the universe is governed, even to the fluttering leaves of trees?), Thou didst provide for my obstinacy wherewith I contended against Vindicianus, an acute old man, and Nebridius, a young man of admirable talents; the former vehemently affirming, and the latter often (though with some doubtfulness) saying, "That there was no such art whereby to foresee things to come, but that men's conjectures often had the nature of an oracle, and that out of their many forecasts, a good part would come to pass, though the foretellers knew nothing of it, but had only stumbled upon it by their ready tongue." Thou didst provide then a friend for me, no negligent consulter of the astrologers; nor yet well skilled in those arts, but (as I said) a diligent consulter with them: yet he knew something, which he said he had heard from his father, but how far it went to overthrow the estimation of that art, he knew not. This man then, Firminus by name, having had a liberal education, and well taught in Rhetoric, consulted me, being an intimate friend of his, as to what, according to his so-called constellations, I thought on certain affairs of his, wherein his worldly hopes had risen, and I, who had herein now begun to incline towards Nebridius' opinion, did not altogether refuse to conjecture, and tell him what came into my unresolved mind; but added, that I was now almost persuaded, that these were but ridiculous and vain follies: thereupon he told me, that his father had been very curious in such books, and had a friend as earnest in them as himself, who with joint study and conference fanned the flame of their affections to these toys, so that they would observe the moments, whereat the very dumb animals, which bred about their houses, gave birth, and then observed the relative position of the heavens, in order to make experiments in this so-called art. He said then that he had heard of his father, that when his mother was about to give birth to him, Firminus, a woman-servant of that friend of his father's, was in the same condition, which could not escape her master's notice, who took care with most exact diligence to know the births of his very puppies. And so it fell out that the

one for his wife, and the other for his servant, with the most careful observation, reckoning days, hours, nay, the lesser divisions of the hours, both were delivered at the same instant ; so that they were constrained to cast the nativity, the one of his son, the other of his servant, from the same constellations even to the minute. For so soon as the women began to be in labour, they each gave notice to the other what was taking place in their houses, and had messengers ready to send to one another, so soon as the actual birth had been announced to each of them ; and that the announcement should be immediately made, they had easily made provision, each in his own domain. Thus then the messengers of the respective parties met, he averred, at such an equal distance from either house, that neither of them could make out any difference in the position of the stars, or any other minutest points ; and yet Firminus, born in his parents' house, in ample circumstances, entered upon his career along the sunnier paths of the world, increased in wealth, and was raised to honours ; but the slave, without any relaxation of the yoke of his condition, continued in servitude to his masters ; as he testified of his own knowledge.

Now when I heard these things, and believed them (the teller being such as he was), all my hesitancy was swept away ; and first I endeavoured to reclaim Firminus himself from that curiosity, by telling him, that upon inspecting his constellations, I ought, if I were to predict truly, to have seen in them, parents eminent among their neighbours, a noble family in its own city, honourable birth, gentle breeding, and liberal education : but if that servant had consulted me upon the same constellations, since they were his also, in order that I might also declare what was true for him, to read in them the meanest lineage, the condition of slavery, and all else most different and remote from the former forecasts ; whence then it must happen, that on inspecting the same stars I should draw opposite conclusions, if I would say truths ; but if I drew the same, I should utter false predictions : thence it followed most certainly, that whatever, upon consideration of the constellations, was predicted truly was predicted not by skill, but by hazard ; but that false predictions were due not to want of skilled knowledge, but to the misleading nature of the hazard.



An opening thus made, ruminating with myself on the like things, that no one of those dotards who followed such a profession, and whom I longed to attack, and confute with ridicule, might urge against me, that Firminus had informed me falsely, or his father him ; I gave my attention to the case of those who are born twins, who for the most part come forth from the womb so near one to other, that the small interval, whatever force they may argue that it has in the nature of things, cannot be noted by human observation, or be at all expressed in those figures which the Astrologer must inspect, that he may predict the truth. Yet they cannot be true : for looking into the same figures, he must have predicted the same of Esau and Jacob, whereas the same things did not befall both. Therefore he must speak falsely ; or if truly, then, looking into the same figures, he must not give the same answer. Not by skill then, but by hazard would he predict the truth. For Thou, O Lord, most righteous Ruler of the Universe, while consulters and consulted know it not, dost by Thy hidden inspiration effect that the consulter should hear what according to the hidden deservings of souls, he ought to hear, out of the abyss of Thy righteous judgment, to Whom let no man say, What is this? Why that? Let him not, oh ! let him not so say ; for he is but man.

## CHAPTER VII.

*He is terribly distressed about the origin of evil.*

NOW then, O my Helper, thou hadst loosed me from those fetters : and I sought “whence is evil,” and found no outlet. But thou sufferedst me not by any waves of thought to be carried away from the Faith whereby I believed that Thou art, and that Thy substance is unchangeable, and that Thou dost exercise Providence and Judgment upon men ; and that in Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, and in the holy Scriptures, which the authority of Thy Catholic Church made binding, Thou didst appoint a way of human salvation unto that life, which shall be after this death. These things being safe and immoveably fixed in my mind, I sought anxiously “whence was evil?” What were the pangs of my labouring heart, what groans, O my God ! yet



even there were Thine ears open, and I knew it not : and when in silence I gave my whole strength to the enquiry, those unspoken sorrows of my soul were strong cries unto Thy mercy. Thou knewest what I suffered, and no man. For, what was there of it which I could convey by my tongue into the ears of my most familiar friends? How could the whole tumult of my soul, for which neither time nor utterance sufficed, reach them? Yet the whole entered into Thy hearing, “which I roared out from the very disquietness of my heart : and my desire was before Thee, and the light of mine eyes was not with me” (Ps. xxxviii. 9, 10). For that was within, I was without. That was not in space. But I was intent upon things which are contained in space, and found there no space where I might rest ; nor did they so receive me, that I could say, “It is enough,” “it is well :” nor did they yet suffer me to turn back, where it might be well enough with me. For I was higher than they, but lower than Thou ; and Thou art my true joy when subjected to Thee, and Thou hadst subjected to me what Thou createdst below me. And this was the true temperament, and the mean line of salvation for me, to remain in Thy Image, and by serving Thee, keep under my body. But when I rose proudly against Thee, and “ran upon the Lord, even upon his neck, with the thick bosses of my buckler” (Job xv. 26), even these inferior things were set above me, and pressed me down, and nowhere was there respite or space of breathing. They met my sight on all sides by heaps and troops, and the images of bodies presented themselves to my thoughts, when I would return to Thee, as if they were saying, “Whither goest thou, unworthy and defiled?” And these things had grown out of my wound ; for Thou “hast humbled the haughty as one that is wounded” (Ps. lxxxix. 10), and by my pompous pride I was separated from Thee ; and my face so puffed up, closed my eyes.

#### CHAPTER VIII.

*By the help of God he little by little draws nigh to truth.*

“**B**UT Thou, O Lord, endurest for ever, and wilt not be angry with us for ever” (Ps. cii. 13 ; lxxxv. 5), because Thou pitiest our dust and ashes, and it was pleasing

in Thy sight to reform my deformities ; and by inward goads didst Thou rouse me, that I should be ill at ease, until Thou wert manifested to my inward sight. Thus, by the secret touch of Thy medicine, was my swelling abated, and the troubled and darkened eyesight of my mind, by the sharp eyesalve of wholesome sorrows, day by day was healed.

## CHAPTER IX.

*He compares the Platonist teaching concerning the Word, with the Christian doctrine, which latter he finds by far more excellent.*

AND Thou, willing first to shew me, how Thou “re-sistest the proud, but givest grace unto the humble” (1 Peter v. 5), and by what mercy Thou hadst pointed out to men the way of humility, in that Thy WORD was made flesh, and dwelt among men ; Thou didst provide me, by means of one puffed up with most unnatural pride, certain books of the Platonists, translated from Greek into Latin. And therein I read, not indeed in these words, but to the same purpose, enforced by many and divers reasons, that “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God : the Same was in the beginning with God : all things were made by Him, and without Him was nothing made : that which was made by Him is life, and the life was the light of men, and the light shineth in the darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not.” And that the soul of man, though it “bears witness to the light,” yet itself “is not that light,” but God, the Word of God, “is that true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” And that “He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not.” But, that “He came into His own, and His own received him not ; but as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His Name ;” this I read not there.

Again I read there, that “God the Word was born not of flesh nor of blood, nor of the will of man, nor of the will of the flesh, but of God.” But that “the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us,” I read not there (*cf.* S. John i. 1-14). For I traced in those books, said differently and in

many ways, that "the Son was in the form of the Father, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God," because naturally He was the Same Substance. But that "He emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and found in fashion as a man, humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross: wherefore God exalted Him" from the dead, "and gave Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father" (Phil. ii. 6 ss.); those books do not contain. For that before all times and above all times Thy Only-Begotten Son remaineth unchangeably, co-eternal with Thee, and that "of His fullness souls receive," that they may be blessed; and that by participation of wisdom abiding in them, they are renewed, so as to be wise, is there. But that "in due time He died for the ungodly" (Rom. v. 6), and that "Thou sparedst not Thine only Son, but deliveredst Him for us all" (Rom. viii. 32), is not there. "For Thou hast hidden these things from the wise, and revealed them to babes," that they "that labour and are heavy laden, might come unto Him, and He might refresh them," because "He is meek and lowly in heart" (S. Matt. xi.); "and the meek He guideth in judgment, and the gentle He teacheth His ways" (Ps. xxv. 9), "looking upon our lowliness and trouble, and forgiving all our sins" (Ps. xxv. 18). But such as are lifted up upon the stilts, as it were, of a more elevated teaching, hear not Him, who saith "Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest to your souls" (S. Matt. ix. 29). "Although they knew God, yet they glorify Him not as God, nor are thankful, but become vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart is darkened; professing themselves to be wise, they became fools" (Rom. i. 21, 22).

And therefore did I read there also, that they had "changed the glory of Thy incorruptible nature" into idols and divers images, "into an image made like unto corruptible man, and to birds and four-footed beasts, and creeping things" (Rom. i. 23); namely into that Egyptian food, for which Esau lost his birthright; since Thy first-born people worshipped the head of a four-footed beast

instead of Thee ; turning in heart back towards Egypt ; and bowing Thy image, their own soul, before the image of "a calf that eateth hay" (Ps. cvi. 20). These things found I here, but I fed not on them. For it pleased Thee, O Lord, to take away the reproach of inferiority from Jacob, "that the elder should serve the younger" (Rom. ix. 12) ; and Thou calledst the Gentiles into Thine inheritance. And I had come to Thee from among the Gentiles ; and I set my mind upon the gold which Thou willedst Thy people to take from Egypt, since, wheresoever it was, it was Thine. And to the Athenians Thou saidst by Thine Apostle, "that in Thee we live, move, and have our being, as one of their own poets had said" (Acts xvii. 28). And verily these books came from thence. But I set not my mind on the idols of the Egyptains, to which they made Thy gold minister, "who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator" (Rom. i. 25).

## CHAPTER X.

*In the inmost recess of his heart, things divine begin to grow more clear.*

AND being thence admonished to return to myself, I entered with Thy guidance into my inmost self, and I was enabled to do so, for Thou wert my Helper. And I entered and beheld with the eye of my soul (such as it was), above the same eye of my soul, above my mind, the Light Unchangeable : not this common light, which shines for all flesh ; nor as it were a greater of the same kind, as though the brightness of this should shine out more and more brightly, and with its greatness take up all space. Not such was this light, but other, yea, far other from all these. Nor was it above my soul, as oil is above water, nor yet as heaven above earth : but higher than I, because It made me ; and I below It, because I was made by It. He that knoweth the Truth, knoweth what that Light is ; and he that knoweth It, knoweth eternity. Charity knoweth It. O eternal Truth, and true Charity, and beloved Eternity. Thou art my God, to Thee do I sigh night and day. And when at first I knew Thee, Thou didst lift me up, that I might see there was what I might see, and that I was not



yet such as could see it. And Thou didst beat back the weakness of my sight, streaming forth Thy beams of light upon me most strongly, and I trembled with love and awe : and I perceived myself to be far off from Thee, in the region of unlikeness, as if I heard this Thy voice from on high : “ I am the food of them that be full grown ; grow, and thou shalt feed upon Me ; nor shalt thou transmute Me into thee, as thou dost the food of thy flesh, but thou shalt be transmuted into Me.” And I learned, that “ Thou for iniquity didst chasten man, and Thou didst make my soul to consume away like a spider ” (Ps. xxxix. 11, Vulg.). And I said, “ Is Truth therefore nothing because it is not diffused through space finite or infinite ? ” And Thou criest to me from afar ; “ Yea verily, I AM that I AM ” (Ex. iii. 14). And I heard, as the heart heareth, nor had I room to doubt, and I should sooner doubt that I live, than that Truth is not, “ which is clearly seen being understood by those things which are made ” (Rom. i. 20).

## CHAPTER XI.

*That creatures are subject to change ; and God alone unchangeable.*

AND I beheld the other things below Thee, and I perceived, that they are neither absolutely existent, nor absolutely non-existent. For they are, since they are from Thee, but are not, because they are not, what Thou art. For that truly is, which remains unchangeably. “ It is good then for me to hold me fast by God ” (Ps. lxxiii. 28) ; for if I remain not in Him, I cannot in myself ; but “ He remaining in Himself, maketh all things new ” (Wisd. vii. 27). “ And Thou art the Lord my God, since my goods are nothing unto Thee ” (Ps. xvi. 2).

## CHAPTER XII.

*Whatsoever things the most good God hath made, are truly good.*

AND it was manifested unto me, that those things be good, which yet are corrupted ; which neither if they were supremely good, nor unless they were good, could be



corrupted : for had they been supremely good, they would have been incorruptible, but if they were not good at all, there would be nothing in them which could be corrupted. For corruption injures, but unless it diminished goodness, it could not injure. Either then corruption injures not, which cannot be ; or which is most certain, all which is corrupted is deprived of good. But if they be deprived of all good, they will altogether cease to be. For if they shall continue to be, but can no longer suffer corruption, they shall be better than before, because they shall abide incorruptibly. And what could be more monstrous, than to affirm that things become better by the loss of all their good ? Therefore, if they shall be deprived of all good, they will entirely cease to be. So long therefore as they are, they are good : therefore whatsoever is, is good. That evil then which I sought, whence it is, is not any substance : for were it a substance, it should be good. For either it should be an incorruptible substance, and so a chief good : or a corruptible substance ; which unless it were good, could not be corrupted. I perceived therefore, and it was manifested to me, that Thou madest all things good, nor is there any substance at all, which Thou madest not ; and for that Thou madest not all things equal, therefore are all things ; because each is good, and altogether very good, because our God “ made all things very good ” (Gen. i.)

## CHAPTER XIII.

*Whatsoever is in heaven and earth, being made good, ought to praise God.*

AND to Thee there is nothing at all evil ; and not only to Thee, but also to Thy creation as a whole, because there is nothing without, which may break in, and corrupt that order which Thou hast appointed to it. But in the parts thereof some things, because they harmonise not with some others, are accounted evil : whereas those very things harmonise with others, and are good ; and in themselves are good. And all these things which harmonise not together, yet do harmonise with the inferior part, which we call Earth, having its own cloudy and windy sky harmonious with itself. Far be it then that I should say, “ These things

should not be : ” for should I see nought but these, I should indeed long for the better ; but still must even for these alone praise Thee ; for these do show that “ Thou art to be praised, from the earth, dragons, and all deeps, fire, hail, snow, ice, and stormy wind, which fulfil Thy word ; mountains, and all hills, fruitful trees, and all cedars ; beasts, and all cattle, creeping things, and feathered fowls ; kings of the earth, and all people, princes, and all judges of the earth ; young men and maidens, old men and children, praise Thy Name. ” But when, from heaven, these “ praise Thee, praise Thee, our God, in the heights, all Thy angels, all Thy hosts, sun and moon, all the stars and light, the Heaven of heavens, and the waters that be above the heavens, praise Thy Name ” (Ps. cxlviii. 1-12) ; I did not now long for things better, because I conceived of all : and with a sounder judgment I apprehended that the things above were better than these below, but all together better than those above alone.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

*They only invent the figment of two primary substances, whom some creature displeaseth.*

THERE is no health in them, whom aught of Thy creation displeaseth : as neither in me, when much which Thou hast made, displeased me. And because my soul durst not be displeased at my God, it would fain deny that aught was Thine which displeased it. Hence it had travelled into a notion of two substances, and found no rest, but talked idly. And returning thence, it had made to itself a God, through infinite measures of all space ; and thought it to be Thee, and placed it in its heart ; and had again become the temple of its own idol, hateful to Thee. But after Thou hadst soothed my head, unknown to me, and closed “ mine eyes that they should not behold vanity ” (Ps. cxix. 37), I ceased somewhat of my former self, and my madness was lulled to sleep ; and I awoke in Thee, and saw Thee infinite, but in another way, and this sight was not derived from the flesh.

## CHAPTER XV.

*Whatsoever things exist owe their being to God.*

AND I looked back on other things ; and I saw that they owed their being to Thee, and were all bounded in Thee : but in a different way ; not as being in space ; but because Thou art in truth He that holdeth all things in the hand ; and all things are true in so far as they have being ; nor is there any falsehood, unless when that is thought to be, which is not. And I saw that all things did harmonize, not with their places only, but with their seasons. And that Thou, who only art Eternal, didst not begin to work after innumerable spaces of times ; for that all spaces of times, both which have passed, and which shall pass, neither go nor come, but through Thee, working and abiding.

## CHAPTER XVI.

*Evil originates not from some substance, but from perverseness of will.*

AND I perceived and found it nothing strange, that bread which is pleasant to the healthy, to the unhealthy palate is nauseous ; and to eyes diseased the light is hateful, which to pure eyes is lovely. And Thy righteousness displeaseth the wicked ; much more the viper and the worm, which Thou hast created good, correspond with the lower orders of Thy Creation, to which also correspond the wicked themselves ; the more so the more unlike they are to Thee : but they correspond to the higher orders also, in so far as they become liker Thee. And I enquired what iniquity was, and found it to be no substance, but the perversion of the will, turned aside from Thee, O God, the Supreme Substance, towards the lowest things, and “ casting away its bowels ” (Ecclus. x. 9), and outwardly swollen.

## CHAPTER XVII.

*Above the changing mind, he finds the unchanging Author of Truth.*

AND I was amazed that I now loved Thee, and no phantasm instead of Thee. And yet did I not persist to enjoy my God; but was borne up to Thee by Thy beauty, and soon borne down from Thee by mine own weight, and fell back, with groaning, upon those lower things: and this weight was carnal habit. Yet dwelt there with me a remembrance of Thee; nor did I any way doubt, that there was One to Whom I might cleave, but that I was not yet such as to cleave to Thee: for "the body which is corrupted, presseth down the soul, and the earthly tabernacle weigheth down the mind that museth upon many things" (Wisd. ix. 15). And most certain I was "that Thy invisible things from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even Thy eternal power and Godhead" (Rom. i. 20). For examining, what caused me to admire the beauty of bodies celestial or terrestrial; and what was of service to me in judging soundly on things changeable, and pronouncing, "This ought to be thus, this not;" examining, I say, what was the cause of my so judging, seeing I did so judge, I had found the unchangeable and true Eternity of Truth, above my changeable mind. And thus by degrees, I passed from bodies to the soul, which perceives through the senses of the body; and thence to its inward faculty, to which the bodily senses communicate external things; and so far even beasts possess it; and thence further to the reasoning faculty, to which is referred for the exercise of judgment upon it, whatsoever is received from the bodily senses. And when this found itself in me also to be a changeable thing, it raised itself up to its own understanding, and diverted my thought from habit, withdrawing itself from those troops of contradictory phantasms; that so it might discover what that light was, by which it was bedewed, when, without any doubtfulness, it cried out, "That the unchangeable must be preferred to the changeable;" whence also it knew the unchangeable itself, without some knowledge of which, it could not with certainty have preferred it to the changeable. And thus with the flash of one trembling glance it arrived

at THAT WHICH IS. And then I saw Thy “invisible things understood by the things which are made” (Rom. i. 20). But I lacked strength to fix my gaze thereon; and my weakness being struck back, I returned to my accustomed ways, bearing with me naught but a loving remembrance, and as it were longing for that, the scent of which I had perceived, but was as yet unable to feed upon.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

*Jesus Christ, the Mediator, is the one only way of salvation.*

AND I continued to seek for a way of gaining strength, which should enable me to enjoy Thee; but I found it not, until I embraced “that Mediator betwixt God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who is over all, God blessed for ever” (1 Tim. ii. 5; and Rom. ix. 5). Who calleth unto me and saith, “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (S. John xiv. 6), and mingleth that food which I was unable to receive, with our flesh. “For the word was made flesh” (S. John i. 14), that Thy wisdom, whereby Thou hast created all things, might provide milk for our infancy. For not yet did I cling to Jesus, My Lord, humbly grasping his humility; nor did I yet know of how great a matter his weakness should be our teacher. For Thy Word, the Eternal Truth, far above the higher parts of Thy Creation, raiseth unto Himself them that are cast down: but in this lower world built for Himself a lowly habitation of our clay, whereby to abase from themselves such as would be subdued, and bring them over to Himself; healing their swelling pride, and nourishing their love; to the end they might go on no further in self-confidence, but rather become weak, seeing before their feet Godhead made weak by sharing with us our “coats of skins;” and when wearied, might throw themselves upon It, and It in Its rising, might uplift them.



## CHAPTER XIX.

*He did not yet clearly understand that passage of S. John, "The Word was made Flesh."*

**B**UT I thought otherwise ; conceiving only of my Lord Christ, as of a man of excellent wisdom, to whom none could be compared : especially because being wonderfully born of a Virgin, to become our example of despising temporal things for the attainment of immortality, He seemed through the divine care on our behalf to have deserved such great authority as our master. But what mystery there lay in "The word was made flesh" I could not even imagine. Only I had learned out of what the Scriptures delivered to us concerning him, that because he ate, and drank, slept, walked, rejoiced, was sorrowful, discoursed ; so surely flesh did not join itself alone unto Thy Word, but with the human soul and mind. All know this, who know the unchangeableness of Thy Word, which I now knew, as far as I could, nor did I at all doubt thereof. For, now to move the limbs of the body by will, now not, now to be moved by some affection, now not, now to utter by syllables wise sayings, now to keep silence ; these are the properties of a mind and soul that is subject to change. And should these things be falsely written of Him, all the rest also would be endangered by the lie, nor would there remain in those books any saving faith for mankind. Since then they were written truly, I acknowledged in Christ an entire humanity ; not the body of a man only, nor, with the body, a living soul without a reasoning spirit, but very man. And I thought that he was to be preferred before others, not as being an Incarnation of Truth,\* but for a certain excellence of human nature, and for a more perfect participation of wisdom. But Alypius imagined the Catholics to believe God to be so clothed with flesh, that besides God and flesh, there was no soul at all in Christ, and did not think that a human mind was ascribed to Him. And because he was well persuaded, that the actions recorded of Him, could only be performed by a vital and a rational creature, he moved the more slowly towards the Christian Faith. But understanding afterwards, that this was the error of the

\* *Persona veritatis.* This seems to be the sense of this difficult phrase.

Apollinarian heretics, he rejoiced in and was conformed to the Catholic Faith. But somewhat later, I confess, did I learn, how in that saying, "The Word was made flesh," the Catholic truth is distinguished from the falsehood of Photinus. For the refutation of heretics makes more boldly to stand out what Thy Church judges, and sound doctrine holds. "For there must also be heresies, that they which are approved may be made manifest among the weak" (1 Cor. xi. 19).

## CHAPTER XX.

*He is glad that his journeying has been from Platonism to the Holy Scriptures, instead of in the reverse direction.*

BUT after then reading the books of the Platonists, wherein I was taught to seek for incorporeal truth, I beheld Thy "invisible things, understood by those things which are made;" and though cast back, I perceived what that was, which through the darkness of my mind I was hindered from contemplating, being assured, "That Thou wert, and wert infinite, and yet not diffused throughout space, finite or infinite; and that Thou truly art who art the same ever, in no part and by no motion changing, and that all other things are from Thee, by this one most certain proof, that they are: of these things I was assured, yet too weak to enjoy Thee. I prated as one well read; but had I not sought Thy way in Christ our Saviour, I should have been not well read, but well nigh dead. For now I began to wish to seem wise, being filled with mine own punishment, yet I let fall no tear, but rather was puffed up with knowledge (1 Cor. viii. i.) For where was that charity building upon the "foundation" of humility, "which is Christ Jesus"? (1 Cor. iii. 11). Or when should these books teach me it? Upon these, I believe, Thou therefore didst purpose that I should light, before I studied Thy Scriptures, that it might be imprinted on my memory, how I was affected by them; and that afterwards when I had been tamed by Thy books, and my wounds touched by Thy healing fingers, I might distinguish the difference between presumption and confession: between those who saw whither they were to go, yet saw not the way, and the way that

leadeth to the beatific country, which is not only to be gazed upon, but also to be dwelt in. For had I first been formed in Thy Holy Scriptures, and hadst Thou in the familiar use of them, grown sweet unto me, and had I then fallen upon those other volumes, they might have perhaps have withdrawn me from the solid ground of piety, or, had I continued in that healthful frame which I had thence imbibed, I might have thought, that it might have been obtained by the study of those books alone.

## CHAPTER XXI.

*He finds in Holy Scripture many consolations and helps, not found in the writings of the Platonists.*

**M**OST eagerly then did I seize that venerable writing of Thy Spirit; and more than all, the Apostle Paul. And those difficulties, in which I formerly thought he contradicted himself, and that the text of his discourse agreed not with the testimonies of the Law and the Prophets, I utterly disappeared. And now the aspect of that pure word appeared but one; and I learned to "rejoice with trembling" (Ps. ii. 11). So I began; and whatsoever truth I had read elsewhere, I found here together with the added excellence of Thy Grace; that whoso sees, may not "so glory as if he had not received" (1 Cor. iv. 7), not only what he sees, but also that he is able to see ("for what hath he, which he hath not received"?), and that he may be not only admonished to behold Thee, Who art ever the same, but also be made whole, to retain Thee. And that "he who cannot see afar off," may yet walk on the way, by which he may come, and behold, and retain; for, though a man "delight in the law of God after the inward man," what shall he do with that "other law in his members warring against the law of his mind, and bringing him into captivity to the law of sin which is in his members" (Rom. vii. 22, 23). For, "Thou art righteous, O Lord, but we have sinned and committed iniquity, and have done wickedly" (Song of the Three Children, 4, 6), and Thy hand is grown heavy upon us, and "we are justly delivered over" unto that antient sinner, the king of death; because he prevailed upon our will to be like his will, whereby "he abode not in Thy truth. What

shall wretched man do? who shall deliver him from the body of this death, but only Thy Grace, through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. vii. 24, 25), whom Thou hast begotten coeternal, and "formedst in the beginning of Thy ways" (Prov. viii. 22). "In whom the prince of this world found nothing worthy of death" (S. John xiv. 30, and S. Luke xxiii. 15), yet killed he Him; and "the handwriting, which was contrary to us, was blotted out" (Col. ii. 14). This those writings contain not. Those pages present not the image of this piety, the tears of confession, Thy "sacrifice, a troubled spirit, a broken and a contrite heart" (Ps. li. 19), the salvation of the people, the "Bride," the "City," "the earnest of the Holy Ghost," "the Cup of our Redemption." No man sings there, "Shall not my soul be submitted unto God? for of Him cometh my salvation. For He is my God and my salvation, my defence, I shall not be greatly moved" (Ps. lxii. 1, 2). No one there hears Him call, "Come unto Me all ye that labour" (S. Matt. xi. 28). They scorn to "learn of Him, because He is meek and lowly in heart;" "for these things hast Thou hid from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes" (S. Matt. xi. 25, 29). For one thing is it, from the wooded hill-top to gaze upon the land of Peace, and find no way to it, and in vain to strive towards it, where lies no path, while all around deserting fugitives lay siege and ambush, with their prince, "the lion and the dragon" (Ps. xci. 13); but another, to hold the way that leadeth thither, beneath the strongholds built by the heavenly commander, where lurk not now the robbers, who have deserted the heavenly Host: for they shun it as a torment. These things did wonderfully sink into my bowels, when I read that "least of Thy Apostles" (1 Cor. xv. 9), and had considered Thy works, and trembled exceedingly.





## Book V333.

AT LAST HE REACHES THE RECORD OF HIS THIRTY-SECOND YEAR, BY FAR THE MOST MEMORABLE OF HIS WHOLE LIFE, IN WHICH HAVING BEEN INSTRUCTED BY SIMPLICIANUS, WITH REFERENCE TO THE CONVERSION OF OTHERS, AND ON THE REASON FOR SUCH A COURSE OF ACTION, AFTER A VIOLENT MENTAL STRUGGLE, HIS WHOLE SPIRIT IS RENEWED, AND HE IS CONVERTED TO GOD.

### CHAPTER I.

*In the struggle between his devotion to Divine things, and his captivity to his passions, he consults Simplicianus concerning Spiritual Renewal.*

O MY God, let me, with thanksgiving, remember, and confess unto Thee Thy mercies upon me. "Let my bones" be bathed in Thy love, and "say, Lord, who is like unto Thee" (Ps. xxxv. 10), "Thou hast broken my bonds in sunder, I will offer unto Thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving" (Ps. cxvi. 16). And how Thou hast broken them, I will declare; and all who worship Thee, when they hear this, shall say, "Blessed be the Lord, in heaven and in earth, great and wonderful is His name." Thy words had stuck fast in my heart, and "I was hedged round about on every side by Thee" (Job i. 10). Of Thy eternal life I was now certain, though I saw it in a figure and as "through a glass" (1 Cor. xiii. 12). And all my doubt as to an incorruptible substance, and as to all other substance having their being from it, was removed; nor did I now desire to be more certain of Thee, but more stedfast in Thee. But for my temporal life, all was wavering, and "my heart had to be purged from the old leaven" (1 Cor. v. 7). *The Way*, the Saviour Himself, well pleased me, but as yet I was reluctant to journey thereon, by reason of its straitness. And Thou didst put into my mind, and it seemed good in



my sight, to go to Simplicianus, who appeared to be a good servant of Thine; and Thy grace shone in him. I had heard also, that from his youth up, he had most devoutly lived to Thee. At that time he had grown old, and from his long years spent in so zealously following Thy ways, he seemed to me to have had much experience, and to have learned much; and truly such was he. I wished then that he would tell me, after learning of my difficulties, what means would be suitable for one, situated as I was, to walk in Thy way.

For, I saw the church full; and one went this way, and another that way. But I did not like to lead a secular life, and now that my desires ceased to inflame me, as they had formerly done, with ambition of honour and wealth, the burden of such a slavery was too great for me to bear. For, in comparison of Thy sweetness, "and the beauty of Thy house which I loved" (Ps. xxvi. 8), those things delighted me no longer. But still I was enthralled with the love of woman; nor did the Apostle forbid me to marry, although he advised me to something better, and especially "would that all men were even as he himself" (1 Cor. vii. 7). But I being weak, chose the softer place; and because of this alone, was distressed and wearied in all beside, and languishing with wasting anxieties, because even in other matters, which I was unwilling to endure, I was obliged to conform to the conjugal life, to which, as I had given myself, I was bound. I had heard from the mouth of the Truth, "that there were some eunuchs, which had made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake: but," saith He, "he that is able to receive it, let him receive it" (S. Matt. xix. 12). "Surely vain are all men who are ignorant of God, and could not out of the good things that are seen, know Him that is" (Wisd. xiii. 1). But I was no longer in that vanity; I had surmounted it; and, by the consent of Thy whole creation, had found Thee our Creator, and Thy Word, God with Thee, and together with Thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, by whom Thou hast created all things. There is yet another kind of ungodly, "who knowing God, glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful" (Rom. i. 21). Into this also had I fallen, but "Thy right hand hath holden me up" (Ps. xviii. 35), and Thou didst take me thence, and place me where I might recover. For

Thou hast said unto man, "Behold, the fear of the Lord is wisdom" (Job xxviii. 28), and, "Be not wise in thine own eyes" (Prov. iii. 7), because "they that professed themselves to be wise, became fools" (Rom. i. 22). But I had now "found the goodly pearl, which, selling all that I had" (S. Matt. xiii. 46), I ought to have "bought," and I hesitated.

## CHAPTER II.

*That holy veteran, Simplicianus, is glad that he has read Plato and the Scriptures; and tells him how Victorinus the Rhetorician read the Sacred Books and was converted to the Faith.*

STRAIGHTWAY I went to Simplicianus, the father in receiving Thy grace of Ambrose, who was then Bishop, and who truly loved him as a father. To him I related the compass of my errors. But when I mentioned that I had read certain books of the Platonists, which Victorinus, formerly Rhetoric Professor of Rome (who had died a Christian, as I had heard), had translated into Latin, he rejoiced with me that I had not fallen in with the writings of other philosophers, full of fallacies, "and deceits, after the rudiments of this world" (Col. ii. 8); whereas, in those books, God and His Word are, by every means, suggested. Then to exhort me to the humility of Christ, "hidden from the wise, and revealed to babes" (S. Matt. xi. 25); he told me of Victorinus himself whom while at Rome he had most intimately known: and what he related of him I will not pass by in silence. For it contains great praise of Thy grace, to be confessed unto Thee, how that aged man, most learned and skilled in the liberal sciences, and who had read, and weighed so many works of the philosophers; the instructor of so many noble Senators, who also, as a monument of his excellent discharge of his office, had deserved and obtained a statue in the Roman Forum, which citizens of this world consider a high distinction; he even to that age a worshipper of idols, and a partaker of the sacrilegious rites, to which almost all the nobility of Rome were given up, and had inspired the people with the love of "monster gods of every kind, and barking Anubis, which once had taken arms against Neptune and Venus, and

Minerva" (Virg. *Æn.* viii. 698), which Rome once conquered, now adored, all which the aged Victorinus had with loud and awesome voice for so many years defended : he now blushed not to become the child of thy Christ, and the babe of Thy Font ; submitting his neck to the yoke of humility, and subduing his forehead to the reproach of the Cross.

O Lord, Lord, "which bowed the heavens and came down, touched the mountains and they did smoke" (Ps. cxliv. 5), by what means didst Thou glide into that breast ? He used to read (as Simplicianus said) the holy Scripture, most studiously examined and searched into all the Christian writings, and used to say to Simplicianus, not openly, but privately and confidentially, "Understand that I am already a Christian." And he would answer, "I will not believe it, nor will I reckon you among Christians, unless I see you in the Church of Christ." The other would laughingly rejoin, "Do walls then make Christians ?" And this he often said, that he was already a Christian ; and Simplicianus often made the same answer, and the jest of the "walls" was by the other often renewed. For he feared to offend his friends, proud demon-worshippers, from the height of whose Babylonian dignity, as from "cedars of Libanus," which "the Lord" had not "yet broken" (Ps. xxix. 5), he supposed the weight of enmity would rush down upon him. But after that by reading and earnest thought he had gathered firmness, and feared to be "denied by Christ before the holy angels, should he now be afraid to confess Him before men" (S. Luke ix. 26), and appeared to himself guilty of a heavy offence, in being ashamed of the Sacraments of the humility of Thy Word, and not being ashamed of the sacrilegious rites of those proud demons, which he had participated in, and had imitated their pride, he grew ashamed of vanity, and was shamed by Truth, and suddenly and unexpectedly said to Simplicianus (as himself told me), "Let us go to the Church ; I wish to be made a Christian." But he, not containing himself for joy, went with him." And having been admitted to the first rites of instruction, he not long after further gave in his name, that he might be regenerated by baptism, Rome wondering, the Church rejoicing. The proud "saw, and were wroth : they gnashed with their teeth, and melted away" (Ps. cxii. 10). But the

“Lord God was the hope” of Thy servant, and “he regarded not vanities and lying madness” (Ps. xl. 5).

To conclude, when the hour was come for making profession of his faith, which at Rome they, who are about to approach to Thy grace, deliver, from an elevated place, in the sight of all the faithful, in a set form of words committed to memory, the presbyters, he said, offered Victorinus, as was customary in the case of such as seemed likely through bashfulness to be alarmed, to make his profession more privately: but he chose rather to profess his salvation in the presence of the holy multitude. “For it was not salvation that he taught in rhetoric, and yet that he publicly professed: how much less then ought he, when pronouncing Thy word, to dread Thy meek flock, who, when delivering his own words, had not feared multitudes of madmen.” When, then, he went up to make his profession, all, as they knew him, uttered his name, one to another, with a cry of congratulation. And who there knew him not? and a hushed sound ran through the lips of the rejoicing assembly, Victorinus! Victorinus! Sudden was the sound of exultation that they saw him; sudden also the silence of attention, that they might hear him. He pronounced the true faith with an excellent boldness, and all wished to draw him into their very heart: yea by their love and joy they drew him thither; such were the hands of them that drew him there.

### CHAPTER III.

*That God and the angels rejoice more over one sinner that repenteth, than over many just persons.*

○ GOOD God, whence is it that men rejoice more over the salvation of a soul despaired of, and freed from greater peril, than if there had always been hope of him, or the peril had been less? For so Thou also, merciful Father, “dost more rejoice over one that repenteth, than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance.” And with great joy do we listen, when we hear “how the angels rejoice when the sheep which had strayed, is brought back upon the shepherd’s shoulder,” and “how the neighbours rejoice with the woman, who hath found the piece



of money, and it is restored to Thy treasury ;” and the festival joy of Thy house moveth us to tears, when in Thy house the story is read of the “ younger son, how he was dead, and is alive again ; was lost, and is found ” (S. Luke xv.) For Thou “ rejoicest ” in us, and in Thy angels, holy through holy charity. For Thou art ever the same ; for all things which are not for ever, and changeless, Thou for ever knowest in the same way.

What then takes place in the soul, when it is more delighted at finding or recovering the things it loves, than if it had ever had them ? yea, and other things witness hereunto ; and all things are full of witnesses, crying out, “ So is it.” The victorious general hath his triumph, yet had gained no victory, had he never fought ; and the greater the peril in the battle, the greater is the joy in the triumph. The tempest tosseth the mariners, and bodeth shipwreck, and all grow pallid at impending death ; but sky and sea grow calm, and great are the rejoicings, for great have been the fears. One beloved is sick, and his pulse gives presage of evil ; all, who desire his restoration, are sick of heart from sympathy ; there is a turn for the better, though as yet he walks not with his former strength ; yet there is such joy, as was not, when before he walked in health and strength. And men pursue even the very pleasures of human life, by troubles, not unlooked for, and falling out against our will, but self chosen, and voluntary. Eating and drinking have no pleasure, unless preceded by the pang of hunger and thirst. Men, given to drink, eat something rather salt, to excite a feverish craving, which the draught allays, and the delight ensues. And it hath been contrived, that brides betrothed should not forthwith be given in marriage, lest the husband should hold her cheap when won, for whom delay had not aroused the bridegroom’s sighs.

This law holds in foul and accursed joy ; this in permitted and lawful joy ; this in the very purest perfection of friendship ; this in him “ who was dead, and was alive again ; had been lost and was found.” Every where a greater joy succeeds a greater pain. What means this, O Lord my God, whereas Thou art to Thyself eternal joy, and some things around Thee evermore rejoice in Thee ? What means this, that this portion of things alternates betwixt ebb



and flow, betwixt offences and reconciliations. Is this their portion, and didst Thou appoint this only for them, when from the heights of heaven to the depths of earth, from the beginning to the end of the ages, from the angel to the worm, from the first motion to the last, Thou wert setting, each in his own place, and ordering, each in its own season, all kinds of good, and all Thy righteous works? Woe is me! how high art Thou in the highest, and how deep in the deepest! and Thou never departest, and we scarcely return to Thee.

#### CHAPTER IV.

*He shows by the example of Victorinus that there is more joy in the conversion of nobles.*

UP, Lord, and do; stir us up, and recall us; kindle and draw us; inflame, grow sweet unto us; let us now love, let us run. Do not many, out of a deeper hell of blindness than Victorinus, return to Thee, approach, and are enlightened, receiving that "Light," which "they who receive, receive power from Thee to become Thy sons"? (S. John i. 9, 12). But if they be less known to the people, even they that know them, joy less for them. For when many share the joy, each individual has a richer measure of joy, because they kindle themselves and mutually inflame each other. Again, because those known to many, influence many towards salvation, and lead the way for many to follow. And therefore do they also who preceded them, much rejoice in them, because they rejoice not in them alone. For far be it, that in Thy tabernacle the persons of the rich should be preferred before the poor, or the noble before the ignoble; seeing rather "Thou hast chosen the weak things of the world, to confound the strong; and the base things of this world, and the things despised hast Thou chosen, and those things which are not, that Thou mightest bring to nought things that are" (1 Cor. i. 27-28). And yet even that least of Thy apostles, by whose tongue Thou soundedst forth these words, when through his warfare, Paulus the Proconsul, his pride conquered, was made to pass under the "easy yoke" of Thy Christ, and became a provincial of the great King; he also instead of as formerly,

Saul, was pleased to be called Paul, for a memorial of so great a victory. For the enemy is more overcome in one, of whom he hath more hold; by whom he hath hold of more. But the proud he hath more hold of, through their nobility; and by them, of more through their authority. Inasmuch then as the heart of Victorinus was deemed more welcome, since the devil had possessed it, as though an irreducible stronghold, and the tongue of Victorinus, with which mighty and keen weapon he had slain many; so much the more abundantly ought Thy sons to rejoice, for that our King "hath bound the strong man" (S. Matt. xii. 29), and they saw his "vessels taken from him and cleansed," and "made meet for Thy honour;" and become "serviceable for the Lord, unto every good work" (2 Tim. ii. 21).

## CHAPTER V.

*The conflict of will, which hindered his return to God.*

BUT when that man of Thine, Simplicianus, related to me this of Victorinus, I burned to imitate him. And for this end had he related it. But when he went on to tell how in the days of the Emperor Julian, a law was made whereby Christians were forbidden to teach grammar and oratory; and how he, in deference to this law, chose rather to forsake the wordy school, than Thy Word, by which Thou "makest the tongues of them that cannot speak eloquent" (Wisd. x. 21); he seemed to me no more brave than happy, in having thus found opportunity to forsake all for Thee. Which thing I was sighing for, bound as I was, not with another's chain, but by my own enchaining will. My will the enemy held, and thence had made a chain for me, and bound me. For of a froward will, was a lust made; and a lust served, a habit was formed; and habit not resisted, became necessity. By these links, as it were, woven together (whence I call it a chain), a hard slavery held me bound. But that new will which had begun to be in me, freely to worship Thee, and to wish to enjoy Thee, O God, Thou one sure joy, was not yet able to overcome that earlier will, strengthened by age. Thus did my two wills, one old, and

the other new, one carnal, the other spiritual, warred against each other ; and by their discord, squandered my soul.

Thus I understood, by my own experience, what I had read, how “the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh” (Gal. v. 17). It was I myself in both ; yet more myself, in that which I approved in myself, than in that which in myself I disapproved. For in the latter, it was now more the “not myself,” because in much I rather unwillingly endured, than willingly did. But yet habit had become a more powerful adversary by my own action, since by my will I had come where I would not be. And who can justly complain, when just punishment overtakes the sinner? No longer had I now the excuse, with which I had formerly been content, that on this ground I did not yet despise the world, and serve Thee, namely because I did not certainly perceive the Truth ; for now it was certain. But I still, bound to the earth, refused to fight under Thy banner, and feared as much to be freed from all hindrances, as I ought to have feared to be hindered by them. Thus with the baggage of this present world was I held down pleasantly, as in sleep : and the thoughts wherein I meditated on Thee, were like the efforts of such as desire to awake, and yet overcome, are sunk again in depths of slumber. And as no one would sleep for ever, and in all men’s sober judgment, waking is better (though often enough a man defers to shake off slumber, when he feels a drowsy heaviness in his limbs, and, though half displeased, yet, even after it is time to rise, too willingly yields to it) ; so I felt convinced that it was better for me to devote myself to Thy charity than to give way to my own lust. But the former satisfied and convinced me ; the latter pleased and fettered me. Nor had I any thing to answer Thee calling to me, “Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light” (Eph. v. 14). And when Thou didst on all sides shew me, that what Thou saidst was true, I, convicted by the truth, had no answer at all to give but the sluggish and sluggardly words, “Presently, oh, presently, let me be a little while.” But my “presently, presently,” had no present ; and “let me be a little while” went on for a long while. In vain did “I delight in Thy law after the inward man, while another law in my members was warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the-

law of sin, which was in my members " (Rom. vii. 23). For the law of sin is the violence of habit, by which an unwilling mind is drawn and holden, but only as it deserves, since it falleth into it willingly. "Wretched man that I was, who should deliver me from the body of this death, but Thy grace only, through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. vii. 25).

## CHAPTER VI.

*Pontitianus relates how two of his companions were converted by reading the life and miracles of S. Anthony.*

AND how Thou didst release me from the bondage of carnal desire, in which I was most straitly holden, and from the slavery of worldly business, I will now declare, and confess unto Thy name, "O Lord, my helper and my redeemer" (Ps. xix. 14). With growing anxiety, I was keeping up my usual pursuits, and daily sighing unto Thee. I attended Thy Church, whenever free from the business beneath the weight of which I groaned. Alypius was with me, now after the third sitting released from his law business, and awaiting clients to whom to sell his counsel, as I sold the skill of speaking, if indeed teaching can impart it. Nebridius had now, in consideration of our friendship, consented to teach under Verecundus, a citizen and a grammarian of Milan, and a very intimate friend of us all; who urgently desired, and by the right of friendship challenged from our company, such faithful aid as he greatly needed. Nebridius then was not drawn to this by any desire of advantage (for he might have made much more of his learning had he so willed), but as a most pleasant and gentle friend, he would not slight our request for an office of kindness. But he acted herein very discreetly, shunning to become known to personages great according to this world, avoiding the distraction of mind thence ensuing, and desiring to have it free and at leisure, as many hours as might be, to seek, or read, or hear something concerning wisdom.

Upon a day then, when Nebridius was absent (I do not remember why), lo, there came to see me and Alypius, one Pontitianus, our countryman in so much as he was an African, holding a high command in the Palace. I do not know what his business with us was, and we sat down to



converse, and it happened that upon a table for some game, before us, he observed a book, took, opened it, and greatly to his surprise, found it the Apostle Paul; for he had thought it some of those books, which I was wearing myself in teaching. Whereat smiling, and looking at me, he expressed his joy and wonder, that he had on a sudden found this book, and this only before my eyes. For he was a Christian, and one of the faithful, and often bowed himself before Thee our God in the Church, in frequent and continued prayers. When then I had told him, that I bestowed very great pains upon those Scriptures, a conversation arose from what he told us of Antony the Egyptian Monk: whose name was in high repute among Thy servants, though to that hour unknown to us. Which when he discovered, he dwelt the more upon that subject, informing and wondering at our ignorance of one so eminent. But we were amazed to hear of Thy miracles, of so recent a record, and in times so near our own, so well attested, wrought in the true Faith and Church Catholic. We all wondered; we, that they were so great, and he, that we had not heard of them before.

Thence his discourse turned to the flocks in the Monasteries, and their customs, a sweet smelling savour unto Thee, and the fruitful deserts of the wilderness, whereof we knew nothing. And there was a Monastery at Milan, full of good brethren, without the city walls, under the fostering care of Ambrose, and we knew it not. He went on with his discourse, and we listened in intent silence. He told us then how one afternoon at Triers, when the Emperor was taken up with the Circensian games, he and three others, his comrades, went out to walk in gardens near the walls, and there as they happened to stroll about in pairs, one went apart with him, and the other two wandered by themselves; and these, in their wanderings, lighted upon a certain cottage, where dwelt some of Thy servants, "poor in spirit, of whom is the kingdom of heaven" (S. Matt. v. 3), and there they found a book, containing the life of Antony. This one of them began to read, and wondered and was excited at it; and as he read, to meditate on taking up such a life, and relinquishing his secular service to serve Thee. And these two were of those whom they style agents for the public affairs. Then suddenly, filled with an holy love, and a sober shame, in anger with himself he cast



his eyes upon his friend, saying, "Tell me, I pray thee, what are we so pushing to come at by all these labours of ours? what are we seeking? For what reason do we render service? Can our hopes in court rise higher than to be the favoured friends of the emperor? and in this, what is there not frail and full of perils? and by how many perils arrive we at a greater peril? and when arrive we thither? But a friend of God, if I wish it, I become now at once." So spake he. And in pain with the travail of a new life, he turned his eyes again upon the book, and read on, and was changed inwardly, where Thou sawest, and his mind was stripped of the world, as soon appeared. For as he read, and rolled up and down the waves of his heart, he groaned for awhile, then discerned, and determined on a better course; and now being Thine, said to his friend, "Now have I broken loose from those our hopes, and am resolved to serve God; and this, from this hour, in this place, I begin upon. If thou likest not to imitate me, oppose not." The other answered, he would cleave to him, to partake so glorious a reward, so glorious a service. Thus both being now Thine, were building the tower at the proper cost, of "forsaking all that they had, and following Thee" (S. Luke xiv. 26, 35). Then Pontitianus and the other with him, that had walked in other parts of the garden, came in search of them to the same place; and finding them, reminded them to return, for the day was declining. But they relating their resolution and purpose, and in what way that determination arose and was confirmed in them, besought them not to trouble them, even if they should refuse to join them. But the others, though nothing altered from their former selves, did yet bewail themselves (as he affirmed), and piously congratulated them, recommending themselves to their prayers; and so, with hearts lingering on the earth, went away to the palace. But the other two, fixing their heart on heaven, remained in the cottage. And both had affianced brides, who when they heard hereof, also dedicated their virginity unto God.

## CHAPTER VII.

*The words of Pontitianus pierce his soul, which sullenly clings to its old habits.*

SUCH was the story of Pontitianus ; but Thou, O Lord, while he was speaking, didst turn me round towards myself, taking me from behind my back where I had placed me, unwilling to observe myself ; and setting me before my face, that I might see how foul I was, how crooked and defiled, bespotted and ulcerous. And I beheld and stood aghast ; and whither to flee from myself I found not. And if I sought to turn mine eye from off myself, he went on with his relation, and Thou again didst set me over against myself, and didst thrust me before my eyes, that "I might find out mine iniquity, and hate it" (Ps. xxxvi. 2). I had known it, but had hidden it away, crushed it down, and forgotten it.

But now, the more ardently I loved those, whose healthful affections I heard of, that they had resigned themselves wholly to Thee to be cured, the more did I abhor myself, when compared with them. For many of my years (some twelve) had now run out with me since my nineteenth, when, upon the reading of Cicero's Hortensius, I was stirred to a zealous desire of wisdom ; and still I was deferring to abandon with contempt earthly happiness, and to devote my leisure to enquiring after that, the mere search for which, and not even the discovery, ought to be preferable to the treasures and kingdoms of the world in actual possession, and to the pleasures of the flesh though abounding at my wish. But I wretched, most wretched, in the very commencement of my early youth, had begged chastity of Thee, and said, "Give me chastity and continency, only not yet." For I feared lest Thou shouldest hear me soon, and soon cure me of the disease of concupiscence, which I wished to have satisfied, rather than extinguished. And I had wandered through crooked ways in a sacrilegious superstition, not indeed assured thereof, but as preferring it to the others which I did not seek with filial devotion, but opposed with hostile malice.

And I had thought, that I therefore deferred from day to day to abandon with scorn the hopes of this world, and

follow Thee only, because there did not appear aught certain, whither to direct my course. And now was the day come wherein I was to be laid bare to myself, and my conscience was to upbraid me. "Where art thou now, my tongue? Thou usedst to say that thou wouldest not for an uncertain truth cast off the baggage of vanity. Lo, now it is certain, and thee that burden still oppresseth, while with shoulders eased they are getting them wings, who have not been worn out in the enquiry, like thee, nor meditated thereon, ten years and more." Thus was I gnawed within, and exceedingly confounded with an horrible shame, while Pontitianus was so speaking. And he having brought to a close his tale and the business he came for, went his way; and I into myself. What said I not against myself? with what stripes of condemnation scourged I not my soul, that it might follow me, in my striving to go after Thee! But it still withstood; refused, though not excused itself. All its arguments had been exhausted, and overthrown; a sullen alarm remained: and she dreaded, as though it were death, to be restrained from the flow of habit, by which she was being wasted to death.

## CHAPTER VIII.

*Augustine retires into the garden, and is greatly agitated.  
Alypius accompanies him.*

THEN in this powerful struggle of my inmost dwelling-place, which I had strongly aroused together with my soul, in the "chamber" of my heart, disturbed in countenance as in mind, I fell upon Alypius, and cried out: "What ails us? what is it? what heardest thou? The unlearned start up and 'take heaven by force' (S. Matt. xi. 12), and we with our learning, and without heart, lo, where we wallow in flesh and blood! Are we ashamed to follow, because others are gone before, and not ashamed not even to follow?" Something of this kind, what I know not, I said; and my passion tore me from him, while he held his peace, gazing at me in astonishment. For the sound of my voice was strange; and face, cheeks, eyes, colour, intonation, spoke out my mind more than the words I uttered. A

little garden there was to our lodging, which we had the use of, as of the whole house ; for the master of the house, our landlord, was not living there. Thither had the tumult of my breast hurried me, where no man might hinder the burning strife upon which I had engaged with myself, until it should end as Thou knewest, but not I. Only that I was distraught for my well-being, and dying for my very life, conscious what an evil thing I was, unconscious what good thing I was shortly to become. I rushed out then into the garden, and Alypius hurried after me. Neither did my seclusion seem broken by his presence ; or how could he forsake me so disturbed ? We sate down as far away as we could from the house. I was groaning in spirit, indignant with most restless indignation, that I could not journey towards Thy Will and Covenant, O my God, towards which “all my bones were crying out” to go, and were praising to the skies ; but thither one journeyeth not in ships, nor in chariots, nor on foot, even so far as I had gone from the house to where we were sitting. For not only to journey thither, but even to arrive there, was nothing else but to will to go, but to will strongly and entirely ; not to turn and toss, this way and that, a will maimed and divided against itself, struggling, one part rising and another sinking.

At last in those passionate hesitations I made many such bodily notions as men sometimes would do, but are unable either from want of limbs, or because these are bound with fetters, or weakened by fatigue, or some other way hindered. Thus, if I tore my hair, beat my forehead, if locking my fingers I clasped my knee, because I willed, I did it. But I might have willed, and not done it ; if the motive power of my limbs had not rendered obedience. So many things then I did, when “to will” was not quite the same as “to be able ;” but I did not then do that which both then I with an incomparably greater longing wished to do, and soon, when I willed, should also be able to do ; because soon, when I willed, I should thoroughly will. For in these things the ability was one with the will, and to will was to do ; and yet was it not done : and more easily did my body obey the weakest willing of my soul, in moving its limbs at its nod, than the soul obeyed itself to accomplish in the will alone this its momentous will.



## CHAPTER IX.

*Whence it happens that the body obeys the mind, but the mind obeys not itself.*

WHENCE is this strange anomaly? and to what end? Let Thy mercy shine, and let me ask, if perchance the secret places of human penalties, and the darkest griefs of the sons of Adam, may perhaps answer me. Whence is this strange anomaly? and to what end? The mind commands the body, and it obeys instantly; the mind commands itself, and is resisted. The mind commands the hand to be moved; and such readiness is there, that command is scarce distinct from obedience. Yet the mind is mind, the hand is body. The mind commands the mind to will, and though itself commands, it obeys not. Whence this strange anomaly? and to what end? It commands itself, I say, to will, and would not command, unless it willed, and what it commands is not done. But it willeth not entirely: therefore doth it not command entirely. For it commandeth only so far as it willeth; and what it commandeth is not done only so far as it willeth not. For the will commandeth that there be a will; not another, but itself. But it doth not command entirely, therefore what it commandeth, is not. For were the will entire, it would not even command it to be, because it would already be. It is therefore no anomaly partly to will, and partly not to will, but a disease of the mind, that it doth not wholly rise, for it is uplifted by truth, but pressed down by habit. And therefore are there two wills, because one of them is not entire: and the one hath, what the other lacketh.

## CHAPTER X.

*He refutes the Manichæan doctrine that the conflict of wills implies two conflicting natures and principles, one Good, the other Evil.*

LET them perish from Thy presence" (Ps. lxxviii. 2), O God, as perish "vain talkers and seducers" (Tit. i. 10) of the soul: who observing that in deliberating there were two wills, affirm, that there are two minds in us



of two kinds, one good, the other evil. Themselves are truly evil, when they hold these evil things; and themselves shall become good if they shall perceive the truth, and assent unto the truth, that Thy Apostle may say to them, "Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord" (Eph. v. 8). But they, wishing to be light, not "in the Lord," but in themselves, imagining the nature of the soul to be that which God is, are made more gross darkness; for through a fearful arrogance they have gone back farther from Thee, from "Thee, the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (S. John i. 9). Take heed what you say, and blush for shame: "draw near unto Him and be lightened, and your faces shall not be ashamed" (Ps. xxxiv. 5). Myself when I was deliberating upon serving the Lord my God now, as I had long purposed, it was I who willed, I who willed not; I, I myself. I neither entirely willed, nor entirely willed not. Therefore was I at strife with myself, and torn in twain by myself. And this tearing in twain befel me against my will, and yet showed, not the presence of another mind, but the punishment of my own. "Therefore it was no more I that wrought it, but sin that dwelt in me" (Rom. vii. 17),\* in punishment of a sin more truly voluntary, because I was a son of Adam.

— For if there be as many contrary natures, as there be conflicting wills; there shall now be not two only, but many. If a man hesitates between going to their conventicle or to the theatre, these folks cry, "Behold here are two natures: one good, draws this way; another bad, draws back that way. For whence else is this hesitation between conflicting wills?" But I say, that both are bad: that which draws to them, as well as that which draws back to the theatre. But they believe not that will to be other than good, which draws to them. What then if one of us should deliberate, and hesitate between his two opposing wills whether he should go to the theatre or to our church? would not they also hesitate what answer to make? For either they must confess, which they do not like to do, that it is by his good will that a man is led to our church, as much as they who

\* The "original sin" which dwelt in him, as a penal result of Adam's fall, rendered him more exposed to temptation, and less strong to resist. Adam's sin, therefore, was more "voluntary" than Augustine's.

are instructed and involved in their mysteries, are by their good will led to their meeting ; or else they must imagine that two evil natures and two evil souls are in conflict in one man : and then their wonted saying, that there is one good, and another bad, will not be true ; or they must be converted to the truth, and no more deny, that where one deliberates, one soul fluctuates between contrary wills.

Let them no more say then, when they perceive two conflicting wills in one man, that the conflict is between two contrary souls, of two contrary substances, from two contrary principles, one good, and the other bad. For 'Thou, O true God, dost disprove, check, and convict them ; as when, both wills being bad, one deliberates, whether he should kill a man by poison, or by the sword ; whether he should seize this or that estate of another's, when he cannot both ; whether he should purchase pleasure by luxury, or keep his money by covetousness ; whether he go to the circus, or the theatre, if both be open on one day, or (to add a third step) to rob another's house, if the opportunity offers, or, fourthly, to commit adultery, if at the same time the means of doing so presents itself ; if all these objects should present themselves at the same moment, and all be equally desired, and yet could not all at once be done : for they rend the mind amid four or even (amid the vast variety of things desired) more, conflicting wills, nor do they yet allege that there are so many divers substances. Similarly also in wills which are good. For I ask them, is it good to take pleasure in reading the Apostle ? or good to take pleasure in a sober Psalm ? or good to discourse on the Gospel ? They will answer to each, "It is good." What then if all give equal pleasure, and all at once ? Do not divers wills distract the mind, while we deliberate which we most of all should choose ? yet are they all good, and are in conflict, till one be chosen, whither the one entire will may be borne, which before was divided between many. So also when eternity delights us above, and the pleasure of temporal good holds us down below, it is the same soul which willeth not this or that with an entire will ; and therefore is torn in twain with grievous anxiety, while for truth's sake it prefers the former, but for custom's sake cannot set aside the latter.

## CHAPTER XI.

*He describes the violence of his inward struggle, as he sought to resolve to renounce his old habits.*

THUS soul-sick was I, and tormented, accusing myself much more severely than my wont, rolling and turning me in my chain, till that were wholly broken, whereby I now was but slightly held ; but yet I was held. And Thou, O Lord, pressedst upon me in my inward parts by a severe mercy, redoubling the lashes of fear and shame, lest I should again give way, and should fail to burst that slight and slender chain, which still remained, and so, it should recover strength, and bind me the faster. For I said within myself, "Be it done now, be it done now"; and as I spake, I came near to resolution ; now I nearly did it, yet did it not ; but fell not back into my old place, but stood hard by, and drew my breath. Again I tried, and came a little nearer ; and a little nearer, again and yet again, to touching, and laying hold of it : yet I came not to it, nor touched, nor held it, hanging still back from dying unto death, and living unto life ; and the worse, which was my wont, had more power over me, than the better, which was unfamiliar : and the very moment wherein I was to become other than I was, the nearer it approached me, the greater horror did it strike into me ; yet did it not strike me back, nor turn me away, but held me in suspense.

Toys of toys, and vanities of vanities, my ancient mistresses, still held me ; they plucked my fleshly garment, and whispered softly, "Dost thou cast us off? and from that moment shall we no more be with thee for ever? and from that moment shall not this or that be lawful for thee for ever?" And what was it which they suggested in what I have called "this or that," what did they suggest, O my God? Let Thy mercy turn it away from the soul of Thy servant. What defilements did they suggest ! What shames ! And now I much less than half heard them, and not openly showing themselves and contradicting me, but muttering as it were behind my back, and furtively twitching me, as I was departing, but to look back on them. Yet they did retard me, so that I delayed to snatch myself away, and shake myself free from them, and to leap over whither I

was called ; a violent habit saying to me, “Thinkest thou, thou canst do without them?”

But now it spake very faintly. For on that side whither I had set my face, and whither I was trembling to go, there appeared unto me the chaste dignity of Continency, serene, and cheerful, though not wantonly so, modestly enticing me to come and doubt not ; and stretching forth to receive and embrace me, her holy hands full of multitudes of good examples. There were so many boys and girls ; there a youthful multitude, and every age, and sober widows, and aged virgins ; and Continence herself in all, not barren, but a “fruitful mother of children” (Ps. cxiii. 8), of joys, by Thee, her Husband, O Lord. And she smiled on me with a persuasive mockery, as if to say, “Canst not thou what these youths, what these maidens can ? or can they either in themselves, and not rather in the Lord their God ? The Lord their God gave me unto them. Why standest thou in thyself, and so standest not ? cast thyself upon him, fear not that He will withdraw Himself that thou shouldest fall ; cast thyself fearlessly, He will receive, and will heal thee.” And I blushed exceedingly, for still kept I hearing the mutterings of those toys ; and still kept hanging in hesitation. And she again seemed to say, “Stop thine ears against ‘those’ thy unclean members ‘on the earth,’ that they may be ‘mortified’” “They tell thee of delights, but not as doth the law of the Lord thy God” (Ps. cxix. 85, Vulg.). This controversy in my heart was self against self only. But Alypius sitting close by my side, in silence waited the issue of my unwonted emotion.

## CHAPTER XII.

*The voice which came to him in the garden, and decided his conversion.*

**B**UT when deep reflection had from the secret store (of memory) drawn and heaped together all my misery in the sight of my heart ; there arose a mighty tempest, bringing a heavy downpour of tears. And that I might pour it all out, with its loud lamentations, I rose from Alypius. Solitude seemed to me better suited to the business of weeping ; so I retired so far that even his presence could



not be a restraint upon me. Thus was it then with me, and he perceived it; for something I suppose I had spoken, wherein the tones of my voice appeared choked with weeping, and so had risen up. He then remained where we were sitting, lost in amazement. I cast myself down I know not how, under a certain fig-tree, and gave rein to my tears; and the floods of mine eyes broke forth, "an acceptable sacrifice to Thee" (Ps. li. 19). And, not indeed in these words, yet to this purpose, spake I much unto Thee: "and Thou, O Lord, how long? how long, Lord, wilt Thou be angry, for ever? O remember not against us former iniquities" (Ps. lxxix. 5, 8), for I felt that I was holden by them. I kept on uttering wretched exclamations: How long? how long, "to-morrow, and to-morrow?" Why not now? why not this hour make an end of my uncleanness?

Such words I spake the while I wept in most bitter contrition of my heart. And lo, from a neighbouring house I heard a voice, as of a boy or girl, I know not, singing and oft repeating, "Take, read; take, read." Instantly, with a changed countenance, I began to think most intently, whether boys in any kind of game used to sing such a phrase; nor could I remember ever to have heard the like. So checking the torrent of my tears, I arose; interpreting it to be no other than a Divine command, to open the book, and read the first chapter I should find. For I had heard of Antony, that he had happened to come in during the reading of the Gospel, and had taken the passage read as a warning, spoken to himself, "Go, sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come and follow me" (S. Matt. xix. 21); and by such oracle he was forthwith converted unto Thee. With such an inspiration then, I returned to the place where Alypius was sitting; for there had I laid the volume of the Apostle, when I arose thence. I seized, opened, and in silence read the passage, upon which my eyes first fell: "Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying: but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof" (Rom. xiii. 13, 14). No further would I read; nor was there need; for instantly at the end of this sentence, as though my heart were flooded with a light of peace, all the shadows of doubt melted away.



Then putting my finger between, or some other mark, I shut the volume, and with a calm countenance made it known to Alypius. And what was wrought in him, which I knew not, he thus showed me. He asked to see what I had read: I showed him; and he looked even further than I had read, and I knew not what followed. This followed, "him that is weak in the faith, receive" (Rom. xiv. 1); which he applied to himself, and disclosed to me. And by this admonition was he strengthened; and by a good resolution and purpose, quite in accordance with his character, wherein he did always very far differ from me, for the better, without any harassing delay he joined me. Thence we go in to my mother; we tell her; she rejoiceth: we relate in order how it took place; she exulteth, and triumpheth, and blessed Thee, "Who art able to do above that which we ask or think" (Eph. iii. 20); for she perceived that Thou hadst given her more for me, than she was wont to ask, in her sorrowful and tearful groanings. For Thou didst so convert me unto Thyself, that I sought neither wife, nor any hope of this world, standing in that rule of faith, where Thou hadst in a vision revealed me to her so many years before. And Thou didst "turn her mourning into joy" (Ps. xxx. 11), fuller by far than she had desired, and by far more dear and chaste, than that of seeing my body's offspring, which she was wont to require.



## Book Ⅲ.

AUGUSTINE DETERMINES TO ABANDON THE PROFESSION OF RHETORIC, AND RETIRES TO CASSIACUM TO PREPARE FOR HOLY BAPTISM, WHICH HE RECEIVES AFTER THE VINTAGE VACATION WITH ALYPIUS AND ADEODATUS. HE DETERMINES WITH HIS FRIENDS TO RETURN TO AFRICA; AND JOURNEYS AS FAR AS TO OSTIA WITH THEM AND WITH HIS MOTHER MONICA. HE DESCRIBES HER EARLY LIFE AND CHARACTER; HER INFLUENCE OVER HER HUSBAND; HER JOY IN HIS CONVERSION; HER DEATH AND BURIAL AT OSTIA, IN AUGUSTINE'S THIRTY-THIRD YEAR.

### CHAPTER I.

*He praises God for His goodness in effecting his conversion.*

“O LORD, I am Thy servant; I am Thy servant, and the son of Thy handmaid: Thou hast broken my bonds in sunder. I will offer to Thee the sacrifice of praise” (Ps. cxvi. 17, 18). Let my heart and my tongue praise Thee; yea, let “all my bones say, O Lord, who is like unto Thee?” (Ps. xxxv. 10). Let them say, and answer Thou me, and “say unto my soul, I am thy salvation?” (Ps. xxxv. 3). Who am I, and what am I? What of evil have my deeds been without, or if not my deeds, my words, or if not my words, my will? But Thou, O Lord, art good and merciful, and Thy right hand had respect unto the depth of my death, and from the bottom of my heart didst draw out that abyss of corruption. And this was the whole matter; that I should refuse what I did choose, and choose what Thou didst choose. But where throughout that year-long time, and from what low and deep recess was my free-will called forth in a moment, whereby to submit my neck to Thy “easy yoke,” and my shoulders unto Thy “light burden,” “O Christ Jesus, my Helper and my Redeemer”? (S. Matt. xi. 30; Ps. xix. 14).

How sweet did it at once become to me, to be without sweetesses of those toys ! and what I feared to lose, I now rejoiced to throw away. For Thou didst cast them forth from me, Thou true and supreme sweetness. Thou didst cast them forth, and Thyself instead didst enter in ; Who art sweeter than all pleasure, though not to flesh and blood ; brighter than all light, but more inward than any secret place ; higher than all honour, but not to them that be high in their own conceits. Now was my soul free from the biting cares of compassing and getting, of wallowing amid and ministering to my lustful foulness ; and to Thee did I as a child babble, my Light, my Wealth, and my Salvation.

## CHAPTER II.

*He resolves to abandon his Rhetoric Professorship after the vintage vacation, which was at hand.*

AND I resolved in Thy sight, not tumultuously to tear, but gently to withdraw, the service of my tongue from the talk market ; that boys who thought not on Thy law, nor on Thy peace, but on foolish lies, and legal conflicts, should buy no more from my mouth the weapons for their raving. And by good hap, but very few days remained before the vintage vacation ; I resolved to endure them, so as formally to resign, and after having been bought by Thee, put myself up for sale no more. Our purpose then was known to Thee ; but to men, other than our own friends, was it not known. For we had agreed among ourselves not to let it out abroad to any : although to us, now ascending from the “vale of misery,” and singing that “song of degrees” (*i.e.*, Ps. lxxxiv.), Thou hadst given “sharp arrows,” and “hot burning coals” against the “deceitful tongue,” which under pretence of giving counsel, gainsayeth us, and under pretence of love devoureth us, as it doth its meat. Thou hadst wounded our heart with the arrow of Thy Charity, and we bore Thy Words as though they transpierced our bowels : and the examples of Thy servants, whom from being black Thou hadst turned to shining white, and from dead to living, were heaped up in the treasury of our reflection, and burnt up and consumed our heavy torpor, that we might not

sink into the deep : and so strongly did they kindle us that every blast of gainsaying from the "deceitful tongue" could only fan into more fierce brightness, not extinguish, our flame. Nevertheless, because for "Thy Name's sake" which Thou hast "hallowed" throughout the earth, this our vow and purpose might also find some to commend it, it seemed like bragging not to wait for the vacation now so near, but to quit sooner a public profession, practised in sight of all, so that the gaze of society would be rivetted upon my action, and they, observing that I was anxious to anticipate the day of the vacation, so near at hand, would make a great talk about it, as if I had wanted to be considered some great one. And what would it have profited me that my purpose should be the subject of consideration and discussion, and that "our good should be evil spoken of" (Rom. xiv. 16).

Moreover, in this very summer, from excessive literary labour, my lungs began to give way, to draw deep breaths with difficulty, to give evidence of their diseased state by pains in the chest, and to prove unequal to the effort of clear and lengthy speech : this had at first troubled me, for it almost constrained me, of necessity, to lay down the burden of that professorship, or, if I could be cured and recover, at least to take a rest. But when there arose and was confirmed in me an utter determination to "be still, and see that Thou art the Lord" (Ps. xlv. 10), Thou knowest, O my God, how I even began to rejoice that this secondary, but not false excuse was ready to my hand, might temper the annoyance of those who wished for the sake of keeping me as their son's master, to prevent my becoming my own. Full then of such joy, I endured till that interval of time were run out ; it may have been some twenty days ; but yet some courage was involved in the endurance, because the covetousness which hitherto shared with me the burden of this heavy business, had gone, and I should have remained to my overwhelming, had not patience taken its place. Perchance, some of Thy servants, my brethren, may say, that I sinned in this, that with a heart fully set on Thy service, I suffered myself to sit even one hour in the chair of falsehood. Nor would I be contentious. But hast not Thou, O most merciful Lord, pardoned and remitted this sin also, with my other most horrible and deadly sins, in the holy water?

## CHAPTER III.

*Verecundus, though not yet a Christian, offers his country house for a time, though sorry that the conversion of Augustine and Alypius will deprive him of their companionship: Nebridius is glad to hear of it, though himself not yet converted.*

VERECUNDUS was tormented with anxiety, concerning this our blessed state, for by reason of the bonds in which he was most straitly held, he saw that he should be deprived of our companionship, he being not yet a Christian, though his wife was one of the faithful: yet it was by her, as a fetter more stringent than the rest, that he was hindered from the journey upon which we had set out. For he would not, he said, be a Christian on any other terms than on those he could not be admitted on. However, he offered us courteously to remain at his country-house, so long as we should stay there. Thou, O Lord, shalt reward him in "the resurrection of the just" (S. Luke xiv. 14), seeing Thou hast already given him "the lot" of the righteous (Ps. cxxv. 3). For although, in our absence, at the time we were at Rome, he was seized with bodily sickness, and having been made, during it, a Christian, and one of the faithful, he departed this life; so "hadst Thou mercy not on him only, but on us also" (Phil. ii. 27), lest remembering the exceeding kindness of our friend towards us, yet unable to number him among Thy flock, we should be racked with intolerable sorrow. Thanks unto Thee our God, we are Thine: Thy exhortations and consolations declare Thee, Thou Faithful Keeper of Promises. Requite unto Verecundus, for his country-house at Cassiacum, where we found rest in Thee from the turmoil of the world, the delight of Thy Paradise, which blossometh ever (since Thou hast forgiven his sins upon earth) in "the mount filled with curds, Thy mount, the mount of abundance" (Ps. lxxviii. 15, an old rendering).

He then had at that time sorrow, but Nebridius joy. For although he also, not being yet a Christian, had fallen into the pit of that most pernicious error, believing the flesh of Thy Son to be a phantom: yet coming forth from that error, he was then in the same state of belief as we; not as yet endued with any Sacraments of Thy Church, but a most ardent seeker after truth. And not long after our con-



version and regeneration by Thy Baptism, being then himself a faithful Catholic, and serving Thee in perfect chastity and continence amongst his people in Africa, after his whole household like himself had become Christian, him didst Thou release from the flesh ; and now he liveth in "Abraham's bosom" (S. Luke xvi. 22). Whatever that be, which is signified by that bosom, there liveth my Nebridius, my sweet friend, and Thy child, O Lord, adopted of a freed man ; there he liveth. For what other place is there for such a soul ? There he liveth, whereof he used much to question me, a poor ignorant creature. Now lays he not his ear to my mouth, but his spiritual mouth unto Thy fountain, and drinketh in wisdom, as much as he can receive, according to his thirst, infinitely blessed. Nor do I think that he is so inebriated therewith, as to be forgetful of me ; seeing Thou, Lord, of whom he drinketh, dost remember us. So were we then, comforting Verecundus, who sorrowed, as far as friendship permitted, that our conversion was of such sort ; and exhorting him to receive the Faith in the state of life he was in, namely the married state ; and awaiting Nebridius to follow us, which, being so near, he could do, and indeed was on the point of doing, when lo ! at last, those days rolled by ; for long and many did they seem, by reason of my love of restful freedom, until I could sing from my very marrow, "My heart hath said unto Thee, I have sought Thy face : Thy face, Lord, will I seek" (Ps. xxvii. 8).

#### CHAPTER IV.

*At Cassiacum, after resigning his professorship, he finds great comfort in the Psalms. He dwells much upon Psalm iv. He experiences great pain, from which God's mercy set him free.*

AND the day came, wherein I was indeed to be freed of my Rhetoric Professorship, from which in thought I had been already freed. And it was done. Thou didst rescue my tongue, whence Thou hadst before rescued my heart, and I blessed Thee, rejoicing ; and went with all my friends to the villa. What I there did in writing, which was now enlisted in Thy service, though still, in this breathing-time as it were, panting from the school of pride, my books

may witness, as well what I debated with others, as what with myself alone, before Thee : what with Nebridius, who was absent, my Epistles bear witness. And when shall time suffice to record all Thy great benefits towards us at that time, especially when hasting on to yet greater mercies ? For my remembrance recalls me, and pleasant is it to me, O Lord, to confess to Thee, by what inward goads Thou didst completely tame me ; and how Thou didst make me plain, “ bringing low the mountains and hills of my thoughts, and making my crooked places straight, my rough places smooth ” (Is. xl. 4) ; and how Thou also didst subdue Alypius, the brother of my heart, unto the Name of Thy Only Begotten, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, which he would not at first vouchsafe to have inserted in our writings. For rather would he have them redolent of the “ cedars ” of the Schools, which now “ the Lord hath broken ” (Ps. xxix. 5) than the healthful herbs of the Church, which are the serpents’ bane.

With what accents did I address Thee, O my God, when I read the Psalms of David, those faithful songs, and sounds of devotion, which admit no proud spirit, while yet a Catechumen, and a novice in Thy real love, resting in that villa, with Alypius a Catechumen, my mother clinging to us, she that wore a woman’s habit with the faith of a man, the calmness of age, the love of a mother, the devotion of a Christian. What accents did I utter unto Thee in those Psalms, and how was I by them kindled towards Thee, and on fire to recite them, if possible, throughout the whole circle of the earth, to subdue the pride of the human race. And yet they are sung through the whole world, and “ there is none hid from Thy heat ” (Ps. xix. 6). With what vehement and bitter sorrow was I indignant against the Manichæans ! and yet I felt pity for them, for they knew not those Sacraments, those medicines, and were mad against the antidote, by which they might have been made sane. Would that they had then been somewhere near me, and without my knowing that they were there, could have beheld my countenance, and heard my words, when I read the fourth Psalm in that time of my rest, and how that Psalm wrought upon me, “ When I called, the God of my righteousness heard me ; Thou didst enlarge me when I was in distress. Have mercy

upon me, O Lord, and hear my prayer.” \* Would they could hear, without my knowing that they heard, so that they might not think that I was speaking for their sakes, what I uttered on these words; because indeed neither should I say the same words, nor in the same way, if I were conscious of being heard and seen by them, nor if I spake them would they so receive them, as when I spake by and for myself before Thee, out of the natural affection of my spirit.

I trembled for fear, and again was on fire with hope, and with rejoicing in Thy mercy, O Father; and all these emotions poured forth through mine eyes, and my voice, when Thy Good Spirit turned towards us, and saith, “O ye sons of men, how long slow of heart? why do ye love vanity, and seek after leasing?” For I had “loved vanity, and sought after leasing.” “And Thou, O Lord,” hadst already “magnified Thy Holy One” (V. 4), raising Him from the dead, and setting Him at Thy right hand, whence from on high He should send His promise, the Comforter, the Spirit of truth. And He had already sent Him, but I knew it not; He had sent Him, because He was now magnified, rising again from the dead, and ascending into heaven. For till then, “the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified” (S. John vii. 39), and the prophecy cried, “How long, slow of heart? why do ye love vanity, and seek after leasing? Know this, that the Lord hath magnified His Holy One.” It cries out, “How long?” It cries out, “Know this:” and I so long, not knowing, “loved vanity, and sought after leasing:” and therefore I heard and trembled, because it was spoken unto such as I remembered myself to have been. For in those phantoms which I had held for truths, was there “vanity and leasing;” and I spake aloud many things with gravity and vigour, in the bitterness of my remembrance. Would that they had heard them, who yet “love vanity and seek after leasing!” They would perchance have been troubled, and have vomited it up; and “Thou wouldest hear them when they cried unto Thee;” for by a true death of the flesh He died for us, “Who also maketh intercession for us” unto Thee (Rom. viii. 34).

I read on, “Be angry, and sin not” (*conf.* Ps. iv. 4, and

\* Psalm iv. 1. The other verses in this Psalm are treated in this chapter; and this reference will suffice. “V” will indicate the Vulgate reading.

Eph. iv. 26). And how was I moved, O my God, who had now learned to be angry with myself for things past, that for the future I might not sin; and to be justly angry, because it was not another nature of the race of darkness which sinned for me, as they say who are not angry at themselves, "but treasure up unto themselves wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of Thy righteous judgment" (Rom. ii. 5). Nor were my "good things" now without, nor sought with the eyes of flesh in yonder sun; for they that would have joy from without soon become empty, and are poured out on the things which are seen, and temporal, and in their famished thoughts do lick their very shadows. Oh that they were wearied out with their want, and said, "Who will shew us any good?" And we would say, and they hear, "The light of Thy countenance is sealed upon us" (V.). For we are not "that light which lighteneth every man" (S. John i. 9), but we are enlightened by Thee; that "we, who were sometimes darkness, may be light in Thee" (Eph. v. 8). Oh that they could see the Inward Light eternal, which I, having tasted, did gnash my teeth that I could not shew them, so long as they brought me their heart in their eyes roving abroad from Thee, while they said, "Who will shew us any good?" For there, where I was angry within myself in my chamber, where I felt compunction, when I had "sacrificed," slaying the old man in me, and beginning to meditate upon my renewal, and "putting my trust in Thee,"—there hadst Thou begun to grow sweet unto me, and "hadst put gladness in my heart." And I cried out, as I read this outwardly, and recognised its truth within: nor did I wish to be increased in earthly good, wasting time and wasted by it, when I might possess in Thy Eternal Simplicity other "corn, and wine, and oil."

And with a cry from the depth of my heart, I cried aloud in the following verse, O "in peace," O "in The Self-Same!" (V.). O what said he, "I will lay me down and take my rest," for who shall hinder us, when "shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory"? (1 Cor. xv. 54). And Thou, who indeed "changest not" art that "Self-Same," and in Thee is rest which forgetteth all toil, for there is none other with Thee, nor are we to seek those many other things, which are not what Thou art: "for Thou Lord only hast made me dwell in



hope." I read, and glowed; nor found I what to do to those deaf and dead, of whom myself had been, a pestilent person, a bitter and a blind barker against those writings, which are honied with the honey of heaven, and luminous with Thine own light: and I "consumed away" over the enemies of this Scripture.

When shall I recall all which passed in those days of leisure? Yet neither have I forgotten, nor will I pass over the severity of Thy scourge, and the wonderful swiftness of Thy mercy. Thou didst at that time excruciate me with pain in my teeth; and when it had grown so bad, that I could not speak, it rose up into my heart to bid all my friends who were there, to pray for me to Thee, the God of all manner of health. And I wrote it on the waxen tablet, and gave it them to read. So soon as with suppliant devotion we had bent our knees, that pain fled. But what pain? or how fled it? I was afraid, I confess it, O my Lord, my God; for I had never, from my earliest age, suffered the like. Thus in this deep was Thy will discovered to me, and rejoicing in faith, I praised Thy Name. And that faith suffered me not to be at ease about my past sins, which had not yet been remitted to me by means of Thy Baptism.

## CHAPTER V.

*S. Ambrose advises him to study the prophecies of Isaiah which, as yet, were too hard for him.*

WHEN the Vintage vacation was over, I intimated to the Milanese that they should appoint some other seller of words for their scholars, both because I had chosen to become Thy servant, and because I was no longer equal to that profession, by reason of the difficulty of breathing, and the pain in my chest. And by letters I signified to Thy Prelate, the holy man Ambrose, my former errors and present solemn purpose, that he might advise me what portion of Thy Books I ought especially to read, to become readier and fitter for receiving so great grace. He recommended Isaiah the Prophet: I believe, because he is clear, beyond others, in foretelling the Gospel and the calling of the Gentiles. But I, not understanding the first lesson of



this book, and imagining the whole to be like it, laid it by, to be resumed when more exercised in the Lord's inspired word.

## CHAPTER VI.

*His Baptism with Alypius and Adeodatus. The character of Adeodatus.*

**T**HENCE, when the time was come, wherein I was to give in my name, we left the country and returned to Milan. It pleased Alypius also to be with me born again in Thee, being already clothed with the humility befitting Thy Sacraments; and a most valiant tamer of the body, even to the point of treading barefoot, with unwonted daring, the icy soil of Italy. We joined with us the boy Adeodatus, the son, after the flesh, of my sin. Excellently hadst Thou made him. He was not quite fifteen, and in wit surpassed many grave and learned men. I confess unto Thee Thy gifts. O Lord my God, Creator of all, and abundantly able to reform our deformities: for I had no part in that boy, but the sin. For that we brought him up in Thy discipline, it was Thou, none else, had inspired us with it. I confess unto Thee Thy gifts. There is a book of ours entitled *The Master*; therein he converses with me. Thou knowest, that all which is there put into the mouth of my interlocutor were his ideas, in his sixteenth year. Much besides, and yet more admirable, I found in him. That talent struck awe into me. And who but Thou could be the artificer of such wonders? Soon didst Thou remove his life from the earth: and I now remember him with the greater confidence, fearing nothing for his childhood or youth, nor for him at all. Him we joined with us, to reckon his birth in Thy grace from the same time with us, to be brought up in Thy discipline; and we were baptised, and anxiety about our past life fled away. Nor was I sated in those days with the wondrous sweetness of considering the depth of Thy counsels concerning the salvation of mankind. How did I weep, in Thy Hymns and Canticles, sharply affected by the voices of Thy Church that sweetly resoundeth! Those tones flowed into mine ears, and the Truth distilled into my heart, whence the affections of my devotion overflowed, and tears ran down, and it was well with me with them.

## CHAPTER VII.

*The rise of Chanting at Milan. The Arian persecution under Justina stayed upon the discovery of the bodies of S. Gervasius and Protasius.*

NOT long had the Church of Milan begun to practise this kind of consolation and exhortation, the brethren giving great care to the tuneful harmony of voices and hearts. For it was a year, or not much more, since Justina, mother of the Emperor Valentinian, a child, persecuted Thy servant Ambrose, on account of her heresy, to which she had been seduced by the Arians. The devout people kept watch in the Church, ready to die with their Bishop Thy servant. There my mother Thy handmaid, bearing a chief part of those anxieties and watchings, lived in prayers. We, though as yet unmelted by the heat of Thy Spirit, were nevertheless excited by the alarm and tumult of the city. Then it was first instituted that according to the custom of the eastern regions, Hymns and Psalms should be sung, lest the people should faint through the fatigue of sorrow ; and from that day to this the custom has been retained ; and to-day many, indeed almost all Thy congregations throughout other parts of the world follow us herein.

Then didst Thou by a vision discover to Thy renowned Bishop, where the bodies of Gervasius and Protasius the martyrs lay hid, which Thou hadst in Thy secret treasury kept hidden, and incorrupt throughout so many years, whence Thou mightest in due season bring them forth, to stay this feminine but royal fury. For when they were discovered and dug up, and with fitting honour translated to the Ambrosian Basilica, not only were those whom unclean spirits vexed cured, and the devils made to confess themselves, but a certain man, who had for many years been blind, a citizen, and well known throughout the city, as soon as he had enquired and heard the reason of the tumultuous rejoicing of the people, leaped up, and begged his guide to lead him thither. When led there he entreated to be admitted to touch with a handkerchief the bier of the "death of Thy Saints, precious in Thy sight" (Ps. cxvi. 5). And when he had done this, and put it to his eyes, they forthwith were opened. Thence did fame spread abroad ; thence did Thy praises more brightly shine ; thence the mind of that enemy,

though not enlarged to the soundness of faith, was yet restrained from the fury of persecution. Thanks to Thee, O my God. Whence and whither hast Thou thus led my remembrance, that I should confess these things also unto Thee, which, great though they be, I had passed by in forgetfulness? And yet then, when "the savour of Thy ointments" was so fragrant, did we not "run after Thee" (Cant. i. 3, 4). Therefore did I weep the more at the singing of Thy hymns, who once panted after Thee, and at length breathed in Thee, as far as breath of life can gain access to this our house of grass.

## CHAPTER VIII.

*He relates the incidents of his mother's early life and education.*

THOU "that makest men of one mind to dwell in one house" (Ps. lxxviii. 6), didst unite with us Euodius also, a young man of our own city. He while discharging the office of agent of public affairs, was converted to Thee and baptised before us, and abandoned his worldly warfare to gird himself for Thine. We were together about to dwell together in our holy resolution. We enquired what place would more usefully engage us as Thy servants; and were together on our way back to Africa. And when we had come to Ostia on the Tiber, my mother died. Much I omit, as hastening much. Receive my confessions and thanksgivings, O my God, for innumerable things whereof I am silent. But I will not omit whatsoever my soul would bring forth concerning that Thy handmaid, who brought me forth, both in the flesh, that I might be born to this temporal light, and in heart, that I might be born to Light eternal. Not her gifts, but Thine in her, will I speak of; for neither did she make nor educate herself. Thou didst create her: nor did her father and mother know what a one should come from them. And the rod of Thy Christ, the discipline of Thine only Son, in a faithful household, a good branch of Thy Church, taught her in Thy fear. Nevertheless she was wont to lay her training not so much to the account of her mother's diligence, as to that of a certain decrepit maid-servant, who had carried her father when a child, as little ones are often carried on the backs of older

girls. For which reason, and for her great age, and excellent conversation, she was in that Christian household held in great respect by the heads of the family. On this account the charge of her master's daughters was committed to her, and she heedfully exercised it, and was earnest, in restraining them when necessary with a holy severity, in teaching them with sober judgment. For, except at those hours wherein they were most temperately fed at their parents' table, she would not suffer them, though parched with thirst, to drink even water; guarding against the formation of a bad habit, and adding this wholesome advice; "You drink water now, because you have not wine in your power; but when you come to be married, and be made mistresses of cellars and pantries, water will seem insipid; but the habit of drinking will remain." By such reasonable instruction, and her authority to command, she curbed the greed of childhood, and regulated the very thirst of the girls to a becoming moderation, so that they no longer wished for what they should not.

And yet there had stolen upon her (so Thy handmaid told me, her son), there had stolen upon her a craving for wine. For when she, in the usual way, as though a sober maiden, was bidden by her parents to draw wine out of the cask, holding the cup under it, she would sip with the tips of her lips, where it lies open above, before pouring the wine into the flask, just a little drop, for she could not do more, from the reluctance of her feelings. Nor did she do this from any desire of drinking too much, but out of the overflowing extravagances of youth, which bubbled up in playful impulses, and which in youthful spirits are generally repressed by the gravity of their elders. And thus by adding daily littles to that little (for "he that contemneth small things shall fall by little and little" *Ecclus. xix. 1*), she had fallen into such a habit, as greedily to drink off her little cup brim-full almost of wine. Where was then that discreet old woman, and that her earnest restraint? Would aught avail against a secret disease, unless Thy healing care, O Lord, kept watch over us? Father, mother, and teachers absent, Thou present, who createdst, who callest, who also by those set over us, workest something towards the salvation of our souls, what didst Thou then, O my God? how didst Thou cure her? how heal her? didst Thou not out of another soul bring forth a



hard and a sharp taunt, like a surgeon's knife out of Thy secret store, and with one piercing cut clear away that corruption? For a maid-servant with whom she used to go to the cellar, quarrelling by hap with her little mistress when alone with her, threw up this fault at her, calling her with most insulting bitterness a "wine-bibber." Stung with this taunt she saw the foulness of her fault, and instantly condemned and forsook it. As flattering friends corrupt, so wrangling enemies oftentimes correct. But Thou dost reward them, not according to what Thou doest by their means, but according to their own intentions. For she in her anger sought to vex her young mistress, not to amend her; and did it in private, either because the time and place of the quarrel so found them; or else lest she herself might run some risk, because she had not revealed it earlier. But Thou, Lord, Governor of all in heaven and earth, who turnest to Thy purposes the depths of torrents, ruling the turbulent tide of the ages, didst heal one soul by the disorder of the other; let not any then when he observes this ascribe it to his own influence, even if another, whom he wishes to be reformed, is reformed by some word of his.

## CHAPTER IX.

*The married life of Monica; her discretion and wifely duty.*

BROUGHT up thus modestly and soberly, and made subject rather by Thee to her parents, than by her parents to Thee, so soon as she was of marriageable age, being bestowed upon a husband, she served him as her lord; and concerned herself to gain him unto Thee, preaching Thee unto him by her conduct, in which Thou didst make her fair, and reverently amiable, and admirable unto her husband. And she so endured his infidelities towards her, that she never had any quarrel with her husband for that cause. For she looked for Thy mercy upon him, that believing in Thee, he might be made chaste. In addition to this, as he was easy in his generosity, so was he passionate in temper: but she had learnt, not to resist an angry husband, not in deed only, but not even in word. Only when he was calmed and quieted, and she saw her oppor-



tunity, she would give an explanation of her actions, if haply he had been unadvisedly aroused. In a word, when many matrons, whose husbands were more good tempered, bearing on their ill-used faces traces of blows, would in conversation with their friends, find fault with their husbands' lives, she would blame their tongues, giving them, as in jest, earnest advice; "That from the time they heard the marriage writings read to them, they should account them as indentures, whereby they were made servants; and thenceforward, remembering their position, they ought not to be arrogant towards their masters." And when they, knowing what a fierce tempered husband she endured, marvelled, that it had never been heard, nor by any token perceived, that Patricius had beaten his wife, or that there had been any domestic quarrel between them, even for one day, and confidentially asking the reason, she taught them her rule, which I have given above. Those wives who followed it, when they had tried it, were delighted: and those who did not follow it, when they were put in their places, were annoyed.

Her mother-in-law also, at first by whisperings of evil servants incensed against her, she so overcame by rendering her services, and by perseverance in meek endurance, that she of her own accord told her son of the meddling tongues of the servants, through which the domestic peace betwixt her and her daughter-in-law had been disturbed, asking him to punish them. Then, when in compliance with his mother, and for the well-ordering of the family, and the harmony of its members, he had with stripes corrected those told of, according to the will of her that told of them, she warned them to expect the like recompense, if any desiring to please her, should speak ill of her daughter-in-law to her; and, none now venturing, they lived together with a remarkable sweetness of mutual kindness.

This great gift also didst Thou bestow, O my God, my mercy, upon that good slave of Thine, in whose womb Thou didst create me, that between any disagreeing and discordant parties where she was able, she shewed herself such a peacemaker, that hearing on both sides most bitter things, such as swelling and indigested choler uses to break out into, when the crudities of enmities are breathed out in sour discourses to a present friend against an absent enemy, she

never would repeat anything from one to the other, unless it were something that might have the effect of reconciling them. A small good this might appear to me, did I not to my grief know numberless persons, who through some horrible and wide-spreading contagion of sin, not only betray to angry foes, the words of angry foes, but even add things never said ; whereas contrariwise to a humane man, it ought to seem a small matter not to arouse or increase enmity by evil speaking, even if one has not striven by kindly speech to allay it ; as was her wont, who was taught by Thee her inmost Master, in the school of her heart.

Finally, her own husband, towards the very end of his earthly life, did she gain unto Thee ; nor had she to complain of that in him as a believer, which before he was a believer she had endured from him. She was also the servant of Thy servants ; whosoever of them knew her, did in her much praise and honour and love Thee ; because he would perceive Thy Presence in her heart by the testimony of the fruits of her holy conversation. For “ she had been the wife of one man, had requited her parents, had governed her house piously, was well reported of for good works, had brought up children ” ( 1 Tim. v. 4, &c. ), so often “ travailing in birth of them ” ( Gal. iv. 19 ), as she saw them go astray from Thee. Lastly, O Lord, since by Thine own gift Thou sufferest Thy servants to speak, she had such care of all of us, who, before she fell asleep in Thee, used to live in companionship together, after receiving the grace of Thy baptism, as though she had been the mother of us all ; so she served us, as though she had been our daughter.

## CHAPTER X.

*A conversation upon the Happiness of the Saints with Monica at Ostia.*

AS now the day drew near, on which she was about to depart out of this life, which day Thou didst know, though we knew it not, it fell out, as I believe, through Thy Providence, working in Thy hidden ways, that she and I alone together, were standing leaning upon a certain window, from which there was a view of the garden within the house which sheltered us, there at Ostia on the Tiber, where apart

from the throng, after the fatigue of our long journey we were recruiting ourselves for our voyage. Together we two held converse very sweet, and "forgetting those things which were behind, and reaching forth unto those things which were before" (Phil. iii. 13), we were discussing between us in the presence of the truth, which Thou art, of what kind would be that eternal life of the Saints, which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man" (1 Cor. ii. 9). But with the mouth of our heart we were panting for the heavenly streams of Thy fount, "the fountain of life, which is with Thee" (Ps. xxxvi. 9), that besprinkled thence according to our capacity we might in some measure meditate upon so great a matter. And when our converse drew to such an end, that the utmost delight of the bodily senses, in the clearest material light, by the side of the enjoyment of that life seemed unworthy not only of comparison with it, but even to be named with it; raising ourselves with a more glowing emotion towards the "Self-Same" (Ps. iv. 8, Vulg.), we wandered step by step through all material things, and even the very heaven whence sun and moon and stars shed their light upon the earth. And further still we climbed, in inner thought, and speech, and in wonder of Thy works, and we reached to our own minds, and passed beyond them, so as to touch the realm of plenty never failing, where Thou feedest Israel for ever in the pasture of the truth, and where life is that Wisdom, by which all things are made, both those which have been, and those which shall be; and Itself is not made, but is now as it was and ever shall be; or rather in it is neither "hath been" nor "shall be," but only "is," since It is eternal. For "hath been" and "shall be" spell not eternity. And while we thus speak and pant after it, with the whole stress of our hearts we just for an instant touched it, and we sighed, and left there bound the "first fruits of the spirit" (Rom. viii. 23), and then returned to the broken murmurs of our own mouth, where the word hath its beginning and its end. And what is like unto Thy Word, our Lord, who abideth in Himself, nor groweth old, and maketh all things new? We were saying then; "if to any one should grow hushed the tumult of the flesh, hushed the images of earth, and of the waters, and the air, hushed too the poles, and if the very soul should be hushed to

itself, and were by cessation of thought of self to pass beyond itself ; if all dreams, and imaginary revelations, every tongue and every token, were hushed, and whatsoever falls out through change ; if to any, such should be wholly hushed to silence, since could any hear them, they all say “ We made not ourselves, but He made us, who abideth for ever,” and this said, if now they should cease to speak, because they had inclined our ears to Him, who made them, and He Himself by Himself should speak, not through them, but of Himself, that so we should hear His Word, not uttered by a tongue of flesh, nor by voice of angel, nor by thunder of a cloud, nor by a parable of comparison, but Himself, whom in these we love, if, I say, we should hear Him, without these, as now we strained ourselves, and in the flight of thought touched upon the eternal Wisdom that abideth over all things ; if this were continued, and other visions of a nature by far inferior were taken away, and this one alone should ravish, and absorb, and enwrap the beholder of it amid inward joys, so that life everlasting might be of such a kind, as was that one moment of comprehension for which we sighed ; were not this an “ Enter Thou into the joy of thy Lord ” (S. Matt. xxv. 21) ? And when shall that be ? Shall it be when “ we all shall rise again, but shall not all be changed ” ( 1 Cor. xv. 51, Vulg.). Such things I said, and if not in this manner and in these words, yet O Lord Thou knowest, that on that day, when we were speaking of such things, and this world with all its delights, amid such converse, was beginning to grow but cheap to us, then said she, “ My son, as for myself, I delight no longer in anything in this life. What yet here I may do, and why I linger here, I know not, now that the hope of this life has died within me. There was but one thing for which I longed to tarry here a while, that I might see thee a Catholic Christian before my death. And this my God hath given me even more abundantly, so that I even see thee His servant, and able to despise mere earthly happiness. What do I here ? ”



## CHAPTER XI.

*His Mother's Death.*

WHAT answer I made her unto these things, I remember not. For scarce five days after, or not much more, she fell sick of a fever; and in that sickness one day she fell into a swoon, and was for a while withdrawn from these visible things. We hastened round her; but she was soon brought back to consciousness; and looking on me and my brother standing by her, said to us inquiringly, "Where was I?" And then looking fixedly on us, who were stunned with grief, said, "Will ye here bury your mother?" I held my peace and refrained my weeping; but my brother spake something to the effect that he wished, as the happier lot for her, that not thus on her journey but in her own country she might die. When she heard this, with an anxious look she chid him with her eyes, for that he still "savoured such things," and then looking upon me; "Behold," saith she, "what he saith;" and soon after to us both, "Lay," she saith, "this body anywhere; let not the care for that any way disquiet you: this only I ask of you, to remember me at the Lord's altar, wherever you be." And having delivered this thought in what words she could, she held her peace, and laboured for breath, as the disorder increased.

But I, considering Thy gifts, Thou unseen God, which Thou dost implant in the hearts of Thy faithful people, and thence come forth wondrous fruits, did rejoice and give thanks to Thee, recalling what I before knew, how careful and anxious she had ever been, as to her grave, which she had provided and prepared for herself beside the body of her husband. For because they had lived in great harmony together, she also wished (so little can the human mind grasp things divine) to have this addition to that happiness, and to have it remembered among men, that it had been permitted her, after her pilgrimage beyond the sea, that the mingled earthly dust of this wedded pair should be buried in the same earth. But when this emptiness had through the fulness of thy Goodness begun to cease in her heart, I knew not, and rejoiced, admiring what she had so disclosed to me; though indeed in that our discourse also in the



window, when she said, "What do I here any longer?" there appeared no desire of dying in her own country. I heard afterwards also, that when we were now at Ostia, she with a mother's confidence, when I was absent, one day discoursed with certain of my friends about the contempt of this life, and the blessing of death: and when they were amazed at the courage which Thou hadst given to her, though a woman, and asked, "Whether she were not afraid to leave her body so far from her own city?" she replied, "Nothing is far to God; neither need I fear that at the end of the world He will not know whence to raise me up again." On the ninth day then of her sickness, in the fifty-sixth year of her age, and the three and thirtieth of mine, was that devout holy soul delivered from the body.

## CHAPTER XII.

*His deep sorrow, and how he restrained it. His mother's burial, and the offering for her of the Holy Sacrifice.*

I CLOSED her eyes; and there flowed withal a mighty sorrow into my heart, and overflowed to tears, and at the same time, by the violent constraint of my will, mine eyes sucked in the stream again, even to drought, and in such a struggle it went very ill with me. But as soon as she breathed her latest breath, the boy Adeodatus burst out into a loud lament; then, checked by us all, held his peace. In like manner, also, something of the child in me, which was inclining to tears, was checked and silenced by the manly voice of my heart. For we thought it not meet to celebrate that funeral with tearful lamentations and groans, since with such often is bewailed some unhappiness of them that die, or their supposed utter destruction. But she died not unhappily, nor did she die utterly. This we knew, both by the witness of her character, by her "faith unfeigned," and by reasons which were certain.

What then was it which did grievously pain me within, but the fresh wound received from the sudden breaking of that most sweet and dear habit of living together? I rejoiced indeed in her testimony, when in the course of her last illness, caressing me as I rendered her some little

services, she called me "dutiful," and dwelt with much loving affection upon never having heard any harsh or unkind word uttered against her by my mouth. But yet, O my God, Who madest us, what comparison is there betwixt that honour that I paid to her, and her slavery for me? Being then forsaken of so great comfort in her, my soul was wounded, and that life rent asunder as it were, which, of hers and mine together, had been made but one.

The boy then being stilled from weeping, Euodius took up the Psalter, and began to sing the Psalm, "My song shall be of mercy and judgment, unto Thee O Lord will I sing" (ci. 1); to which the whole household made response. And when they heard what was going forward, many brethren and religious women came together; and while they whose duty it was, made the customary preparations for burial, I apart from them, where I becomingly could do so, together with those who thought not fit to leave me, discoursed upon something fitting the time; and by this balm of truth, assuaged that torment, known to Thee, though they knew it not, and listened intently, imagining that I was without any sense of grief. But in Thy ears, where none of them heard, I blamed the weakness of my feelings, and restrained the flood of my grief, which yielded a little to me, and then again was borne upon me with a rush, though not so as to provoke an outbreak of tears, nor even a change of countenance; but I knew what I was repressing in my heart. And since it much displeased me that these accidents of our humanity, which must befall in the due order and appointed lot of our condition, should so affect me, with another grief I grieved over my grief, and was fretted with a double sorrow.

And behold, the corpse was carried to the burial; we went and returned without tears. For not even in those prayers which we poured forth unto Thee, when the Sacrifice of our redemption was offered on her behalf, when now the corpse was by the grave's side, as the custom there is, previous to its being laid therein—not even in those prayers did I weep; yet was I the whole day in secret heavily sad, and with troubled mind prayed Thee, as I could, to heal my sorrow, yet Thou didst not; impressing, I believe, upon my memory by this one instance, how strong is the bond of all habit, even upon a soul, which now feeds upon

no deceiving Word. It seemed also good to me to go and bathe, having heard that "bath" (balneum) hence derived its name, namely from the Greek βαλανεῖον, because it drives anxiety from the mind. And this also I confess unto Thy mercy, "Father of the fatherless" (Ps. lxxviii. 5), that I bathed and was the same as before I bathed. For the bitterness of my grief did not pass in sweat from my heart. Then I slept, and rose up again, and found my sorrow diminished not a little; and as I lay lonely on my bed, I recalled the truthful verses of Thine Ambrose. For Thou art

The God who hast created all,  
And hold'st the outspread sky in thrall,  
Who deck'st the day with beauteous light,  
With gracious slumber robest the night;  
That so, to wearied limbs, sweet rest  
For daily tasks may bring new zest,  
And comfort minds worn out with grief,  
While sorrow's burdens find relief.

And then by little and little I recovered my former thoughts of Thy handmaid, and her conversation towards Thee devout, towards us kind and compliant, and holy, whereof I was suddenly deprived: and I was minded to weep in Thy sight, concerning her and for her; concerning myself, and for myself. And I gave my tears which I had restrained till now leave to flow as they would, and prepared in them a resting place for my heart; and it found rest in them, for it was in Thy ears, not in those of man, who would have scornfully interpreted my weeping. And now, Lord, in writing I confess it unto Thee. Let who will read it, and interpret it as he will; even if he shall find it a sin that I wept for my mother for a little part of an hour, the mother who for the time was dead to mine eyes, who had for many years wept for me that I might live in Thine eyes, let him not deride me; but rather, if he be one of large charity, let him weep himself for my sins unto Thee, the Father of all the brethren of Thy Christ.

## CHAPTER XIII.

*He prays for his mother ; and requests for her the prayers of such as shall read his " Confessions."*

AT last, that wound of my heart was healed, which might have seemed blameworthy for the earthliness of its affection, and I pour out unto Thee, our God, in behalf of that Thy handmaid, a far different kind of tears, flowing from a spirit stricken by the remembrance of the dangers of every soul that "in Adam dieth" (1 Cor. xv. 22). And although she "in Christ had been made alive," even before her release from the flesh, and had so lived that Thy Name was praised in her faith and conduct, yet dare I not say that from the time when Thou didst regenerate her by baptism, no word had issued from her mouth contrary to Thy Commandment. Thy Son, the Truth, hath said, "Whosoever shall say unto his brother, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire" (S. Matt. v. 22). But woe even to the men whose lives deserve praise, if without mercy Thou shouldest search them through. But since Thou "art not extreme to mark what is done amiss" (Ps. cxxx. 3), we confidently hope to find with Thee some place of indulgence. But whosoever reckons up his real merits to Thee, what reckons he up to Thee, but Thine own gifts? O that men would know themselves to be but men; and that "he that glorieth, would glory in the Lord" (2 Cor. x. 17).

I therefore, O my Praise and my Life, God of my heart, laying aside for a while her good deeds, for which rejoicing I render thanks to Thee, do now entreat Thee for the sins of my mother. Harken unto me, through the Medicine of our wounds, Who hung upon the tree, and now "sitting at Thy right hand maketh intercession to Thee for us" (Rom. viii. 34). I know that she dealt mercifully, and "from her heart forgave her debtors their debts; do Thou also forgive her debts" (S. Matt. xviii. 35), whatever she may have contracted in so many years, since the water of salvation. Forgive her, Lord, forgive, I beseech Thee; "enter not into judgment with her" (Ps. cxliii. 2). "Let mercy rejoice against judgment" (S. James ii. 13), since Thy words are true, and Thou hast promised "mercy unto the merciful"



(S. Matt. v. 7). Since they became so by Thy gift to them, "Who wilt have mercy on whom Thou wilt have mercy, and wilt have compassion on whom Thou wilt have compassion" (Rom. ix. 15).

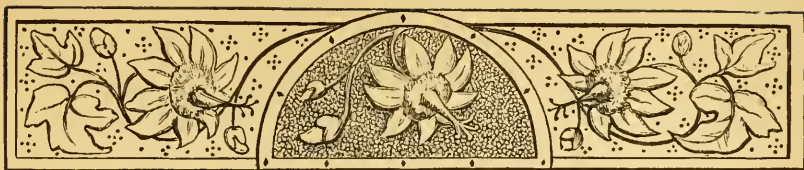
And, I believe, Thou hast already done what I ask Thee; but "accept, O Lord, the free-will offerings of my mouth" (Ps. cxix. 108). For she, the day of her dissolution now at hand, took no thought to have her body sumptuously wound up, or embalmed with spices; nor did she desire a choice monument, or feel anxious for a grave in her own land. These things she enjoined us not; but desired only that a memorial of her might be made at Thine Altar, which she had served without missing one day, whence she knew was dispensed the Sacred Host, by Which the "hand-writing that was against us, is blotted out" (Col ii. 14), through Which the enemy was triumphed over, who reckoning up our offences, and seeking what to lay to our charge, "found nothing in Him" (S. John xiv. 30), in Whom we conquer. Who shall restore to Him the innocent blood? Who repay Him the price wherewith He bought us, that so he may take us out of His hand? Unto this Sacrament of our redemption, Thy handmaid bound her soul by the bond of faith. Let none tear her from Thy protection: let neither "the lion nor the dragon" interpose himself by force or fraud. For she will not answer that her debt is naught, lest she be convicted and held by the crafty accuser: but she will answer, that "her debts are forgiven" her by Him, to Whom none can repay that price, which He, Who owed nothing, paid for us.

May she rest then in peace with the husband, before and after whom she had no other; whom she served, "bringing forth fruit with patience" (S. Luke viii. 15) unto Thee, that she might gain him also for Thee. And inspire, O Lord my God, inspire Thy servants my brethren, Thy sons my masters, whom with voice, and heart, and pen I serve, that so many as shall read these Confessions, may have in remembrance at Thine Altar, Monica Thy handmaid, with Patricius, her sometime husband, through whose flesh Thou didst bring me into this life, how, I know not. May they with devout affection remember them, in this transitory light my parents, under Thee, our Father, in the Catholic mother, my brethren, and in that heavenly Jerusalem (for which Thy



people sigh in their pilgrimage from their going out even unto their return thither), my fellow-citizens ; that so her last request to me may be more richly granted in the prayers of many obtained by means of my Confessions, than it could be through my own prayers.





## Book Ʒ.

HE DESCRIBES WHAT HE HAD BECOME SINCE HIS CONVERSION : PROFESSING HIS LOVE TO GOD ; AND SEEKS AMONG THE FACULTIES OF THE SOUL THE MEANS BY WHICH WE KNOW GOD. ESPECIALLY HE DISCUSSES THE NATURE OF THE MEMORY, WHEREIN GOD DWELLETH. HE EXAMINES HIMSELF WITH REGARD TO THE TRIPLE LUST OF THE FLESH, OF THE EYES, AND OF PRIDE OF LIFE, AND CONFESSES THAT HIS WHOLE TRUST IS IN CHRIST JESUS, THE MEDIATOR BETWEEN GOD AND MAN.

### CHAPTER I.

*He desireth to know God.*

LET me know Thee, O my Creator, “let me know Thee, even as also I am known” (1 Cor. xiii. 12). Power of my soul, enter into it, and fit it for Thyself, that Thou mayest have and hold it “without spot or wrinkle” (Eph. v. 27). This is my hope, “therefore do I speak” (Ps. cxvi. 10) ; and in this hope do I rejoice, when I rejoice healthfully. The other things of this life are the less to be bewailed, the more they are bewailed ; and the more they are to be bewailed, the less men bewail them. For behold, Thou desirest truth” (Ps. li. 6), and “he that doeth it, cometh to the light” (S. John iii. 20). This would I do in my heart before Thee in confession : and in my writing, before many witnesses.

### CHAPTER II.

*Though God knoweth the depths of our nature, it is good to make confession unto him.*

AND from Thee, O Lord, “in whose eyes is naked” (Heb. iv. 13) the abyss of man’s conscience, what could be hidden in me though I were unwilling to confess

it? For I should hide Thee from myself, not myself from Thee. But now, since my groaning beareth witness that I am displeasing to myself, Thou shinest out, and art pleasing, and beloved, and longed for; that I may be ashamed of myself, and renounce myself, and choose Thee, and neither please Thee, nor myself, but in Thee. To Thee therefore, O Lord, am I open, whatever I am; and with what fruit I confess unto Thee, I have said. Nor do I it with words and utterances of the flesh, but with the words of my soul, and the cry of the thought which Thy ear knoweth. For when I am evil, then to confess to Thee is nothing else than to be displeased with myself; but when devout, to confess unto Thee is nothing else than not to ascribe it to myself: because Thou, O Lord, "dost bless the righteous" (Ps. v. 13), but first Thou "justifiest him when ungodly" (Rom. v. 10). My confession then, O my God, in Thy sight, is made silently, and not silently. For in sound, it is silent; in affection, it cries aloud. For neither do I utter anything right unto men, which Thou hast not before heard from me; nor dost Thou hear any such thing from me, which Thou hast not first said unto me.

### CHAPTER III.

*With what intent he maketh confession before men of his present condition.*

WHAT then have I to do with men, that they should hear my confessions, as if they could "heal all my infirmities"? (Ps. ciii. 3). The race is curious to know the lives of others, backward to correct their own. Why seek they to hear from me what I am; who will not hear from Thee what themselves are? And how know they, when from myself they hear of myself, whether I say true; seeing "no man knows what is in man, but the spirit of man which is in him"? (1 Cor. ii. 11). But if they hear from Thee of themselves, they cannot say, "The Lord lieth." For what is it to hear from Thee of themselves, but to know themselves? and who knoweth and saith, "It is false," unless himself lieth? But because "charity believeth all things" (1 Cor. xiii. 7), especially among those, whom

knitting to itself, it maketh one, I also, O Lord, will even so make confession to Thee, that men may hear, to whom I am unable to prove whether I confess the truth, yet they whose ears charity openeth to me, believe me.

But do Thou, my inmost Physician, make plain unto me, what fruit I may pluck from this action. For the confessions of my past sins, which Thou hast "forgiven and covered" (Ps. xxxii. 1), that Thou mightest bless me in Thee, changing my soul by Faith and Thy Sacrament, when read and heard, stir up the heart, that it may not slumber in despair, and say, "I can't," but awake in the love of Thy mercy and the sweetness of Thy grace, whereby, every one that is weak is made strong, when by means of it he becomes conscious within himself of his own weakness, and it delighteth the good to hear the past sins of them, that now have abandoned them; but it delights them not because they are evil, but because they were, and are so no longer. With what fruit then, O Lord my God, to whom day by day my conscience confesseth, trusting rather in the hope of Thy mercy than in its own innocence, with what fruit, I ask, do I, by this book, confess to men also in Thy presence, what I now am, not what I have been? For that other fruit I have seen and described. But what I now am, at the very time of making these confessions, many desire to know, who have or have not known me, who have heard from me or of me; but their ear is not at my heart, where I am, whatever I am. They wish then to hear me confess what I am within; whither they can penetrate neither with eye, nor ear, nor mind: they are even willing to believe; but will they know? For charity, whence they gain their goodness, telleth them that in my confessions I lie not; and she in them, believeth me.

#### CHAPTER IV.

*He declares what results he hopeth for from his Confessions.*

**B**UT for what fruit do they desire this? Are they desirous to rejoice with me when they have heard how near to Thee I draw by Thy bounty, and to pray for

me when they have heard how much I am hindered by my own weight? To such will I discover myself. For it is no small fruit, O Lord my God, "that by many thanks should be given to Thee on our behalf" (2 Cor. i. 11), and that Thou shouldest be entreated by many for us. Let the fraternal spirit love in me, what Thou teachest is to be loved, and lament in me, what Thou teachest is to be lamented. This let a fraternal spirit do, not a stranger's, not that of the "strange children, whose mouth talketh of vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of iniquity" (Ps. cxliv. 11), but that fraternal spirit which, when it approveth me, rejoiceth for me, and when it disapproveth me, sorroweth for me; because whether it approveth or disapproveth, it loveth me. To such will I discover myself; at that which is good in me let them draw breath with joy, at what is ill, let them breathe a sigh. All my good is Thy appointment, and Thy gift; all my evil mine own faults, and Thy judgments. For the one let them draw breath with joy, for the other let them sigh—and let their hymn and their lamentation both ascend into Thy Presence, from their fraternal hearts, which are Thy censers. But do Thou, O Lord, rejoicing in the sweet perfume of Thy Holy Temple, "have mercy upon me after Thy great goodness" (Ps. li.), for Thy Name's sake; and by no means forsaking what Thou hast begun, make perfect my imperfections.

This is the fruit of my confessions, not of what I have been, but of what I am, that I may confess this not only before Thee, with a secret "rejoicing with trembling" (Ps. ii. 11), and a secret sorrowing with hope, but also in the ears of the sons of men who believe, the companions of my joy, and partakers of my mortality, fellow citizens and fellow pilgrims with me, whether they are gone before, or follow after, or tread with me the path of life. These are Thy servants, my brethren, whom Thou hast willed to be Thy sons; my masters, whom Thou hast bidden me serve, if I would live with Thee, of Thee. But this Thy Word were all too little for me, did it in speech alone enjoin, and not in deed prevent. And this I do both in deeds and words, this I do "beneath Thy wings" in peril too great, were not my soul subdued to Thee beneath Thy wings, and my weakness known to Thee. I am but a little one, but my Father ever liveth, and my Guardian is "suffi-



cient for me." For He is the same who hath begotten and doth guard me; and Thou Thyself art all my good; Thou Almighty, Who art with me, yea, before I am with Thee. To such then as Thou biddest me serve, will I discover, not what I have been, but what I now am and what I yet may be. But yet "I judge not mine own self" (1 Cor. iv. 3). Thus therefore I would be heard.

## CHAPTER V.

*Our confessions cannot but be imperfect; for man knoweth not himself as God knoweth.*

FOR "Thou, Lord, dost judge me:" because, although "no man knoweth the things of a man, but the spirit of a man which is in him," yet is there something of man, which not even "the spirit of man that is in him," itself "knoweth" (1 Cor. ii. 11). But Thou, Lord, who hast made him, knowest all concerning him. Yet I, though in Thy sight I despise myself, and account myself "dust and ashes;" yet know I something of Thee, which I know not of myself. And in truth "now we see through a glass darkly," not yet "face to face" (1 Cor. xiii. 12); and therefore so long as I wander far off from Thee, I am more present with myself than with Thee; and yet I know that Thou canst in no way suffer harm. But what temptations I can resist, what I cannot, I know not. Yet there is hope, because "Thou art faithful, Who wilt not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able; but wilt with the temptation also make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. x. 13). I will confess then what I know of myself, I will confess also what I know not of myself; since what I do know of myself, I know by Thy shining upon me; and what I know not of myself, I know not only, until "my darkness be made as the noon-day" (Is. lviii. 10) in Thy countenance.

## CHAPTER VI.

*He searcheth throughout the material creation, wherein he findeth not God ; though it speaketh of Him.*

NOT with doubting, but with assured consciousness, do I love Thee, Lord. Thou hast stricken my heart with Thy word, and I loved Thee. Yea also "heaven and earth, and all that therein is," behold, on every side they bid me love Thee ; nor cease to say so unto all, "that they may be without excuse" (Rom. i. 20). But more deeply "wilt Thou have mercy on whom Thou wilt have mercy, and wilt have compassion on whom Thou wilt have compassion" (Rom. ix. 15), or else the heaven and the earth declare Thy praises to deaf ears. But what do I love, when I love Thee? not beauty of the body, nor harmony of time, nor the brilliancy of light, so pleasant to these eyes, nor sweet melodies of every kind of song, nor the sweet scent of flowers, and perfumes, and spices, not manna and honey, not limbs inviting to fleshly embrace. Not these do I love, when I love my God ; and yet I love a kind of light, and melody, and fragrance, and food, and embrace, when I love my God, the light, melody, fragrance, food, embrace of my inward man : where there shineth upon my soul, what space containeth not, and where resoundeth what time stealeth not away, and where is fragrance that a breath scattereth not, and where there is flavour that eating lesseneth not, and where there is an embrace that satiety rendeth not asunder. This I love, when I love my God.

And what is this? I asked the earth, and it answered me, "I am not He ;" and all that therein is confessed the same. I asked the sea and the depths, and the creeping things with life, and they answered, "We are not thy God, seek thou above us." I asked the breezy gales ; and the airy universe, and all its denizens replied, "Anaximenes is mistaken. I am not God." I asked heaven, sun, moon, stars, "neither are we," say they, "the God whom thou seekest." And I said unto all things which stand about the gateways of my flesh ; "Ye have told me of my God, that ye are not He ; tell me something of Him." And they cried out with a loud voice, "He made us." My study of them was my question to them ; their beauty their response to me. And I turned

myself unto myself, and said to myself, "What art thou?" And I answered, "A man." And behold, in me there confront me soul and body, the one without, the other within. Which is it of these, wherein I ought to seek my God, whom I had already sought through the body from earth even to heaven, as far as I could send as messengers the beams of mine eyes. But that which is within is the better; for to it all the bodily members made report, as to a president and judge, concerning the several responses of heaven and earth, and all things therein, which said "We are not God, but He made us." The inner man knew this by the agency of the outer—my inward self knew this, I myself, I, the living soul through the senses of my body. I questioned the whole fabric of the world about my God; and it replied to me, "I am not He, but He made me."

Is not this beauty manifest to all whose perception is sound? why then speaks it not the same to all? Animals small and great see it, but they cannot question it: because reason is not placed in the seat of judgment over their senses, to receive their reports. But men can ask, so that "the invisible things of God are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made" (Rom. i. 20); but by love of them, they are made subject unto them; and being subject, cannot judge. Nor yet do the creatures answer such as ask, unless they can judge: they do not indeed change their tone, that is their appearance, because one only looks upon them, while another looks upon and questions them, so as to present one appearance to the one, another to the other; but having the same appearance to each, to one it is dumb, to the other it is eloquent; or rather to all it is eloquent: but they only understand who compare its tone, perceived without, with the truth within. For the truth saith unto me, "Neither heaven, nor earth nor any material thing is thy God." This, their very nature saith to him that seeth them; "They are a mass; a mass is less in a part thereof, than in the whole." Now to thee I speak, O my soul, thou art my better part: for thou quickenest the mass of my body, giving it life, which no body can give to a body: but thy God is even unto thee the Life of thy life.

## CHAPTER VII.

*Neither doth he find God in any vital or sentient faculty within himself.*

WHAT then do I love, when I love my God? who is He above the head of my soul? By my very soul will I ascend to Him. I will pass beyond that power whereby I am united to my body, and fill its whole frame with life. Nor can I by that power find my God; for so "horse and mule that have no understanding" (Ps. xxxii. 9), might find Him; seeing it is the same power, whereby even their bodies live. But another power there is, not that only whereby I animate, but that too whereby I render sentient that flesh, which the Lord hath fashioned for me; which bids the eye not to hear, and the ear not to see; but the former, that I may see by it, the latter that I may hear by it: and the other senses respectively their own positions and functions, all of which are different, while I, the one living mind, act through them. I will pass beyond this power of mine also; for this also have the horse and mule, for they also perceive through the body.

## CHAPTER VIII.

*He seeketh Him in his memory; and describeth its wonders.*

I WILL pass then beyond this power of my nature also, rising by degrees unto Him, who made me. And I come to the fields and spreading courts of memory, where are treasures of unnumbered impressions of things of every kind, stored by the senses. There is hoarded even what we imagine, whether by increasing or diminishing, or in any way varying what sense hath observed: and whatever else hath been entrusted to it, and laid up, which forgetfulness hath not yet swallowed up and buried. When I am there I require what I will, to be brought forth, and some things appear forthwith; for some things the search is longer, and they seem to be dragged out of some more secret retreats; some things rush forth in crowds, and while another is being hunted up, and sought after, leap into notice, as

though they were saying "Is it not us by chance?" And with my heart's hand I brush them from the face of my recollection, until what I want looks out from the clouds, and comes forth from its lurking places into sight. Other things are easily suggested, and in an unbroken order, when called for, the antecedents make way for the consequents, and as they depart, are put away, ready to come forth again, when I shall desire. All this happens when I tell a thing got by heart. There all things are kept distinct, and according to their kind, as many as have been brought in, each through his own approach: as light, and all colours and material forms, through the eyes; but through the ears all kinds of sounds; all odours through the approach of the nostrils; all flavours by the approach of the mouth; but by the general perception of the whole body, what is hard, what soft, what hot or cold, smooth or rough, heavy or light, whether external or internal to the body. All these doth that vast hall of memory (and I know not what secret and untold passages she hath) receive to bring forth at need, and to examine again; all of which enter through their own gateways, and are laid up in her; nor do they themselves enter, but impressions of things perceived by sense are ready there, for reflection to recall them. And who can tell how these images were fashioned? though it is clear enough by what senses they have been seized, and hidden away within. For even while I am dwelling in darkness and in silence, in my memory, if I choose it, I can call up colours, and distinguish between white and black, and whatsoever others I will; nor do sounds rush in to disturb my meditation upon what was drawn in by my eyes, though they too are there, and seem to be put away and remain hidden in a place apart. For I call for them too at my pleasure, and there they are forthwith. And though my tongue be still, and my throat silent, I sing as much as I like; and those images of colours, which are there no less, do not thrust themselves forward, nor interrupt, when another treasure, which poured in at the ears, is again being dealt with. So also I recall other things, which have been imported and stored up through my other senses, just as I please: and the scent of lilies I can distinguish from that of violets, though actually smelling nothing; and I can prefer honey to mead, the smooth to the rough, though at



the moment making use of neither taste nor touch, but only of remembrance.

This I do within, in the huge hall of my memory. For there the heaven, and the earth, and the sea, with all that in them is which I have been able to discern by sense, are ready to my hand, saving only such things as I have forgotten. There also I meet with myself, and I remember myself, what I did, and when, and where, and in what way, when I did it, I was affected by it. There are all things I remember, whether such as have arisen within my own experience, or those to which I have given credit. Moreover out of the same copious store I weave in with the past varying impressions of things either experienced, or such as I have believed from my own experience; and from these again forecast actions, events, and hopes; and I exercise myself in them all, as though really present again. "This or that will I do," I say to myself, in that vast secret chamber of my mind, filled with images of things so many and so great, "and this or that will follow." "O that it might be that or the other!" "God forbid this or that." Such things within myself I say, and while I am saying them the images of all are before me, out of that same treasury of memory, nor could I say them at all if they were wanting there. Great is that power of memory, too great, my God, that wide and unbounded sanctuary. Who can come at the depth of it? And this is a power of my soul, and belongs to my nature, nor can I even myself take in the whole of what I am. Therefore the mind is too narrow to contain itself. And where can that portion of it be, which itself cannot take in? Is it outside itself, and not in itself? How then is it that it cannot take it in? A great amazement arises with me, upon this; surprise astounds me. And men travel to enjoy the heights of mountains, and the mighty billows of the sea, and the wide flowing tides of rivers, and the expanse of ocean, and the circuits of the stars, and leave themselves behind, and feel no wonder that though I speak of all these things, I do not see them with mine eyes; and yet I could not speak of them, did I not see within in my memory, in those spaces so vast, mountains, and billows, and rivers, and stars, which I have seen, and ocean, of which I have heard, as though I were looking upon them without. Yet I did not swallow

them up by looking at them, when I saw them with these eyes : nor are they themselves within me, but their images. And I know from what bodily sense each impression in me hath been derived.

## CHAPTER IX.

*In what way the liberal sciences may be said to be in the memory.*

BUT not only these things doeth that unmeasured spaciousness of my memory contain. Here too are all those things which I have learnt of the liberal sciences, and not forgotten, put back as it were in an inward place, which is no place ; nor have I there the images of these things, but the things themselves. For what literature is, what skill in discussion, how many kinds of questions there are, what ever I know about these things, is in such a manner contained in my memory, that I do not keep the image, and leave the thing itself without, neither hath it sounded and passed by, as a voice imprinted through the ears by some impress, whereby it might be recalled as though it still sounded, when it hath already ceased to sound : or as a sweet odour affects the organ of smell, while it is passing by, and being dissipated in the air, whence it casts upon the memory an image of itself, which we recall in recollection ; or as food, which certainly hath no taste when it hath reached the stomach, still has a sort of taste in the memory. Indeed these things themselves are not admitted to it, but only their images are caught with wonderful speed, and are laid by, as though in wonderful cabinets, and wonderfully brought forth again by recollecting them.

## CHAPTER X.

*Of the channels through which literature has access to the memory.*

BUT when I hear that there are three kinds of questions : namely, whether a thing is? what it is? of what kind it is? I retain indeed images of the sounds, of which these words are composed, and I know that they themselves have

passed through the air with a vibration, and exist no longer ; but the things themselves, signified by those sounds, I have neither touched upon with any bodily sense, nor have I seen them anywhere beyond my mind : and in my memory I have stored away not their images but themselves, and whence they found entrance to me let them tell if they can. For I pass through all the doors of my flesh, nor find I through which of them they made their entry. For the eyes say, "if they are coloured, we ushered them in ;" the ears say, "if they sounded, they were declared by us ;" the nostrils say, "if they have any smell, they passed through by us ;" the sense of taste says, "if they have no flavour, ask me nothing about them ;" touch says, "if it have not bulk, I have not handled it, and if I have not handled it, I have not shown it in. Whence and how have they found entrance to my memory? I know not how ; for when I learnt them, I did not believe them in another's mind, but recognised them in my own, and proved their truth, and entrusted them to it, just as if putting them away somewhere, whence I could fetch them out when I chose. There therefore they were, even before I had learned them, but in memory they were not. Where then were they? or why when they were spoken, did I assent to them and say "It is so, it is true," unless they were already in my memory, but so far off, and so concealed, as if in very secret corners, that unless dragged out by the suggestion of another, I could not even by chance think of them.

## CHAPTER XI.

*How things are learnt by the memory.*

WHEREFORE we conclude that to learn those things, whose images we do not imbibe through our senses, but discern themselves by themselves within us, but without images as they are, is nothing else than to collect as it were by thought, those things which the memory held though promiscuously and without arrangement, and to provide by heedful consideration, that they may be placed ready to hand in that same memory, where before they were lurking scattered and neglected, so as to easily occur to the mind once

familiarised with them. And how many things of this kind does my memory bear which have been already found out, and as I said, placed as it were at hand, which we are said to have learned and come to know ; which were I for some short space of time to cease to call to mind, they are again so buried, and glide back, as it were, into the more distant secret chambers, that they must, as though new, be thought out again from thence (for other abode they have none), and be driven together again, that they may be known ; that is to say, they must as it were be collected together from their dispersion : whence the word “to cogitate” is derived. For “cogo” and “cogito” (*i.e.*, “I drive together,” and “I ponder upon”) have the same connection as “ago” with “agito,” and “facio” with “factito.” But the mind has claimed this word for its own exclusive use, so that not what is collected elsewhere, but only what is collected in the mind, that is, is “driven together,” can properly be described as “pondered upon.”

## CHAPTER XII.

### *Of the memory of numbers.*

THE memory containeth also reasons and laws innumerable of numbers and dimensions, none of which hath any bodily sense impressed ; seeing they have neither colour, nor sound, nor scent, nor taste, nor bulk. I have heard the sound of the words whereby when discussed they are denoted : but the sounds are of one kind, the things themselves are quite different. For the sounds differ in Greek and in Latin : but the things are neither Greek nor Latin, nor any other language. I have seen the lines of craftsmen ; as fine as possible, like the gossamer of a spider ; but these things are of another kind ; they are not the images of those which my fleshly eye has made known to me. He only knoweth them, who without any conception of any kind of body hath recognised them within himself. I have perceived also the numbers of the things with which we number all the senses of my body ; but those numbers wherewith we number, are different, nor are they the images of these, and therefore they indeed are. Let him who seeth them not, deride me for saying these things, and I will pity him, while he derides me.

## CHAPTER XIII.

*Of the memory of remembrances ; and of the memory of the emotions of the mind.*

ALL these things I keep in my memory, and how I learnt them I keep in my memory. Many things also most falsely objected against them have I heard, and keep in my memory, which though they be false, yet is it not false that I remember them ; and I remember also that I have distinguished between those truths and these falsehoods alleged against them. And I perceive that to distinguish between them now, and to remember that I have often distinguished between them, when I have many times pondered over them, are quite different things. I remember therefore both that I have often understood these things ; and also, I stow away in my memory what I now discern and understand, that hereafter I may remember that I understood it now. Therefore I remember also the fact that I have remembered ; so that if afterwards I recall that I have now been able to remember, I shall certainly recall it by the power of memory. The emotions also of the mind this same memory contains, though not in the same way as the mind itself holds them, when it is enduring them ; but in a very different manner, according to its own power. For without rejoicing I remember that I did rejoice ; and without sorrow I recollect my past sorrows ; and that I was “ sometime afraid ” I recall without present fear ; and I call to mind an ancient desire without renewal of desire. Nay, on the contrary, I am sometimes glad when I remember past sorrow, and sorry when recalling joy.

## CHAPTER XIV.

*That the recollection of certain emotions doth not awaken similar emotions.*

AND this is not remarkable with regard to the body ; for mind is one thing, body another. If I therefore with joy remember some past pain of body, it is not so wonderful ; but here is the marvel, in that memory itself is mind.



for when we are bidding one to hold anything in memory, we say, "See that you keep it in mind;" and when we forget, we say, "It was not in my mind," or, "It slipped out of my mind," calling the memory itself the mind. Since then this is so, how is it, that when with joy I remember my past sorrow, the mind hath joy, and the memory sorrow; but the mind has joy by reason of the gladness in it, while the memory is not sad by reason of the sorrow that is in it? Does the memory perchance not belong to the mind? Who will say so? The memory then is a sort of belly of the mind, and joy and sadness a kind of food, sweet or bitter; when these are entrusted to the memory, they are passed into a kind of belly; and there they can be stowed, but can no longer have a flavour. Ridiculous it is to imagine these to be alike; and yet are they not utterly unlike.

But see I am drawing upon my memory, when I say there are four emotions of the mind, desire, joy, fear, sorrow; and whatever discussion I may hold upon them, by dividing each into its subordinate species, and by defining it, it is there that I find what to say, and thence I produce it: yet am I not moved by any of these emotions, when by calling them to mind, I remember them; and even before I recalled them, and dealt with them again, they were there; and therefore could they, by recollection, thence be brought. Perchance, then, as meat from the belly by rumination, so by recollection these are brought up again from the memory. Why then is not the sweetness of joy, or the bitterness of sorrow, tasted in the mouth of his thought by the disputant, that is, by him who remembers? Is the comparison unlike in this, because not in all respects like? For who would willingly speak of such things if as often as we name grief or fear, we should be compelled to be sad or fearful? And yet we could not speak of them, did we not find in our memory, not only the sounds of the names according to the images impressed by the bodily senses, but notions of the very things themselves which we have received through no fleshly gateway, but which the mind itself perceiving by the experience of its own passions, committed to the memory, or the memory of itself retained, though they were not entrusted to it.

## CHAPTER XV.

*That images of things present as well as absent are retained in the memory.*

**B**UT whether by images or no, who can readily say? Thus, I name a stone, I name the sun, the things themselves not being present to my senses, but their images to my memory. I name a bodily pain, yet it is not present with me, when nothing aches: yet unless its image were present in my memory, I should not know what to say of it, neither in discussion about it could I distinguish it from pleasure. I name bodily health; being sound in body, the thing itself is present with me; yet, unless its image also were present in my memory, I could by no means recall what the sound of this name should signify. Nor would the sick, when health were named, understand what was being spoken of, unless the same image were retained by the power of memory, although the thing itself were absent from the body. I name numbers whereby we number; and not their images, but themselves are present in my memory. I name the image of the sun, and that image is present in my memory. For I recall not the image of its image, but itself; there it is itself when I remember it. I name memory, and I recognise what I name. And where do I recognise it, but in the memory itself? Is it also present to itself by its image, and not by itself?

## CHAPTER XVI.

*Of the memory of forgetfulness.*

**W**HAT, when I name forgetfulness, and withal recognise what I name? whence should I recognise it, unless I remembered it? I am not speaking of the sound of the name, but of the thing which it signifies: and if I had forgotten this, I certainly should not be able to recognise what the sound meant. When then I remember memory, memory itself is, through itself, present with itself: but when I remember forgetfulness, there are present both memory and forgetfulness; memory by which I remember,

forgetfulness which I remember. But what is forgetfulness, but the privation of memory? How then is it present that I remember it, since when it is present I cannot remember? But if we remember anything, we keep it in memory; but unless we remembered forgetfulness, we could not in any way realise, upon hearing that word, the thing which it denotes. Forgetfulness therefore is retained in the memory. It is present then that we may not forget, yet when it is present, we forget. Is it to be understood from this, that forgetfulness, when we remember it, is not present to the memory by itself, but by its image: because if it were present by itself, it would not cause us to remember, but to forget? Who now shall search out this? who shall comprehend how it is?

Lord, I, truly, toil therein, yea and toil in myself; I am become a difficult soil, demanding excessive "sweat." For we are not now exploring tracts of sky, or measuring the distances of the stars, or enquiring into the gravity of the earth. It is I myself who remember, I a rational mind. It would not be so wonderful if something not myself were so far out of my reach. But what is nearer to me than myself? And lo, the power of mine own memory is not understood by me; though I cannot so much as name myself without it. For what shall I say, when it is clear to me that I remember forgetfulness? Shall I say that that is not in my memory, which I remember? or shall I say that forgetfulness is in my memory, on purpose that I should not forget? Either is most absurd. What third course is there? How can I say that the image of forgetfulness is retained by my memory, not forgetfulness itself, when I remember it? How could I say this either, seeing that when the image of anything is impressed on the memory, the thing itself must needs be first present, whence that image may be impressed? For thus do I remember Carthage, thus all places where I have been, thus the faces of men I have seen, and things reported by the other senses; thus, too, the health or sickness of the body. For when these things were present, my memory received from them images, which, being present with me, I might look on and go over again in my mind, when they were gone and I remembered them. If then this forgetfulness is retained in the memory through its image, not through itself, then plainly, itself was

once present, that its image might be received. But when it was present, how did it sketch its image in the memory, seeing that by its presence it obliterates even what it finds already jotted down? And yet, in whatever way, although that way be incomprehensible and inexplicable, yet certain am I that I remember even that very forgetfulness, wherein what we remember is overwhelmed.

## CHAPTER XVII.

*Though the power of memory be vast and wonderful, he passeth beyond it in his search after God.*

GR<sup>E</sup>AT is the power of memory, a fearful thing, O my God, a deep and boundless manifoldness; and this thing is the rational mind, and this am I myself. What am I then, O my God? What nature am I? A life various and manifold, and vast exceedingly. Behold in the plains, and caves, and caverns of my memory, innumerable and innumerably full of innumerable kinds of things, either through images, as all bodies; or by actual presence, as the arts; or by certain notions or impressions, as the emotions of the mind, which, even when the mind doth not undergo, the memory retaineth, while yet whatsoever is in the memory, is also in the mind—through all these do I run, and flit hither and thither; I penetrate them as far as I can, and there is no limit. So great is the power of memory, so great the power of life in mortal man. What shall I do then, O Thou my true life, my God? I will pass even beyond this power of mine which is called memory: yea, I will pass beyond it, that I may even attain unto Thee, O sweet Light. What sayest Thou to me? See, I am mounting up through my mind towards Thee who abidest above me: and I now will pass beyond this power of mine which is called memory, desirous to reach unto Thee, where Thou mayest be reached; and to cleave unto Thee, whence one may cleave unto Thee. For even beasts and birds have memory; else could they not return to their dens and nests, nor many other things they are used unto: nor indeed could they be used to any thing, but by memory. I will pass then beyond memory also, that I may arrive at Him who hath separated

me from the four-footed beasts and made me wiser than the fowls of the air. I will pass beyond memory also, and where shall I find Thee, Thou truly good and certain sweetness? And where shall I find Thee?

## CHAPTER XVIII.

*How what is lost, must still remain in the memory, that it may be found again.*

IF I find Thee without my memory, then have I not Thee in my remembrance. And how shall I find Thee if I have Thee not in remembrance? For the woman that had lost her groat (S. Luke xv. 1) and sought it with a light; unless she had remembered it, could not have found it. For when it was found, whence should she know whether it were the same, if she had no remembrance of it? I remember to have sought and found many a lost thing; and this I thereby know, that when I was seeking any of them, and was asked, "Is this it?" "Is that it?" so long said I "No," until that was offered me which I was seeking. And had I not remembered it, whatever it was, even had it been offered to me I should not have found it, for I should not have been able to recognise it. And so it ever is, when we seek and find any lost thing. Notwithstanding, when any thing is by chance lost from the sight, not from the memory, yet, like some visible body, its image is still retained within, and it is sought until it is restored to sight, and when it has been found, it is recognised by its correspondence with the inward image; nor do we say that we have found what was lost, unless we recognise it; nor can we recognise it, unless we remember it. This thing then was lost only to the eyes; in the memory it was retained.



## CHAPTER XIX.

*That forgotten things are not wholly lost by the memory ; or if wholly lost cannot be recovered.*

BUT what when the memory itself loses anything, which happens when we forget, and seek to recollect? where do we finally search but in the memory itself? and there, if one thing be perchance offered instead of another, we reject it, until we meet with that of which we are in search, and when we have met with it, we say, "This is it;" which we should not say unless we recognised it, nor recognise it unless we remembered it. But we had certainly forgotten it. Or is it that it had not entirely escaped us? but by some portion which we retained, the other part was sought for; because the memory perceived that it was not making the wonted associations, and as though halting through the maiming of its wonted operation, kept pressing for the restoration of what was missing? For instance, if we see with our eyes, or only think of somebody we know, but forget his name, and are trying to recall it, if any other should occur to us, it does not connect itself with him, because we have never been accustomed to associate it with him, and we therefore reject it, until that comes back to us whereon at once our usual recognition easily settles. And whence does that present itself, but out of the memory itself? for even when we recognise it, on being reminded by another, it is thence it comes. For we do not give credit to it as a novelty, but remember it, and acknowledge that it is as stated to us. But were it utterly blotted out of the mind, we should not remember it, even when reminded. For we have not as yet utterly forgotten that, which we still remember that we have forgotten. So we cannot even seek what is lost, if we have utterly forgotten it.

## CHAPTER XX.

*With what manner of desire men seek the Blessed Life ; and what knowledge they have of it.*

HOW then do I seek Thee, O Lord? For when I seek Thee, my God, I seek the blessed life. "I will seek Thee that my soul may live" (Amos v. 6). For my body

liveth by my soul ; and my soul by Thee. How then do I seek the blessed life? for it is not mine until I can say, there where I ought to say it, "It is enough"? How do I seek it? Is it by remembrance as though I had forgotten it, yet still retained that I had forgotten it? or by desiring to learn it as a thing unknown, whether I had never known it, or so forgotten it, as not even to remember that I had forgotten it? Is not the blessed life that which all desire, so that there is absolutely none that does not desire it? Where have they known it, that they so desire it? where seen it that they so love it? Truly we have it, how, I know not. Yea, there is another way, wherein when one hath it, for the time he is happy; and there are those who are happy in hope. These have it in a lower degree, than they who have it in very deed; yet are they better off than such as are happy neither in deed nor in hope. Yet even these, had they it not in some sort, would not so will to be happy; but that they do will it is most certain. They have known it then, I know not how, and so have it by some sort of knowledge, what I know not, and am doubtful whether it be in the memory; because if it be there, then we must have formerly been happy. Whether each individually, or all in that man who first sinned, "in whom also we all died" (1 Cor. xv. 22), and from whom we are all born with misery, I now enquire not; but only, whether the blessed life be in the memory? for we could not love it, unless we knew it. We hear the name, and confess that we all desire the thing itself; it is not the mere sound that charms us. For when a Greek hears it in Latin, he is not charmed because he knows not what is said; but he would be as pleased as we are if he heard it in Greek; because the thing itself is neither Greek nor Latin, which Greeks and Latins, and men of all other tongues pant to attain. Know therefore it is to all, for could they with one voice be asked, "would they be happy?" they would answer without any hesitation that "they would." And this could not be, unless the thing itself whereof it is the name, were retained in their memory.

## CHAPTER XXI.

*Whence do we derive our memory of the blessed life?*

BUT is it in the same way as one, who has seen it, remembers Carthage? No. For the blessed life is not seen with the eye, because it is not material. Is it as we remember numbers then? No. For he that has these in his knowledge, seeks no further to attain them : but the blessed life, we have in our knowledge, and therefore love it, and yet still desire to attain it, that we may be happy. As we remember eloquence then? No. For although upon hearing this name also, some call to mind the thing, who still are not yet eloquent, and many who desire to be so, whence it appears that it is in their knowledge ; yet these have by their bodily senses observed others to be eloquent, and been delighted, and desire to become so, although except from some inward knowledge they would not be delighted, nor wish to become the like, unless they were delighted. But the blessed life we do not by any bodily sense know by our experience from others. Is it as we remember joy? Perhaps it may be. For even when sad I remember my joy, so doth the wretched the happy life ; nor did I ever with bodily sense see, hear, smell, taste, or touch my joy ; but I experienced it in my mind, when I rejoiced ; and the knowledge of it clave to my memory, so that I can recall it, sometimes with disgust, sometimes with regret, according to the various nature of the things, on account of which I remember that I have rejoiced. For even from foul things have I been pervaded with a sort of joy ; which now recalling, I detest and execrate ; sometimes also from good and honourable things ; and I now recall them with regret, although perchance no longer present ; and therefore with sadness I recall former joy.

Where then and when did I experience my blessed life, that I should remember and love, and crave for it? Nor is it I alone, or some few besides, but absolutely all would fain be happy. And unless we knew of it by some certain knowledge, we should not wish for it with so certain a will. But how is it that if two men were asked whether they would like to enlist for soldiers, one, perchance would answer that he would, the other, that he would not ; but if

they were asked, whether they would be happy, both would instantly without any hesitation say they would ; and for no other reason would the one enlist, and the other not, but that they might be happy. Is it perchance, that as one looks for his joy in this thing, another in that, all agree in their desire of being happy, as they would (if they were asked), that they wished to have joy, and this joy they call a happy life? Although then one obtains this joy by one means, another by another, all have one end, which they strive to attain, namely joy. And since this is a thing which none can say that he has never experienced, it is therefore found in the memory, and recognised whenever the name of a blessed life is mentioned.

## CHAPTER XXII.

*The true joy of the blessed life.*

FAR be it, Lord, far be it from the heart of Thy servant who here confesseth unto Thee, far be it, that, be the joy what it may, I should therefore think myself happy. For there is a "joy" which is "not" given "to the ungodly" (Is. xlviii. 22), but to those who worship Thee for Thine own sake, whose joy Thou Thyself art. And this is the blessed life, to rejoice to Thee, of Thee, for Thee ; this it is, and there is no other. For they who think there is another, pursue some other joy, and not the true. But their will is not turned away from some shadow of joy.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

*That all desire joy in the truth.*

IT is not certain then that all wish to be happy, inasmuch as they who wish not to joy in Thee, which is the only blessed life, do not truly desire the blessed life. Or do all men desire this, but "because the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, so that they cannot do the things that they would" (Gal. v. 17), they fall upon that which they can, and are content therewith ; because,



what they are not able to do, they do not will so strongly, as would suffice to make them able? For I ask any one, had he rather joy in truth, or in falsehood? They will as little hesitate to say, "in the truth," as to say, "that they desire to be happy." But the blessed life is joy in the truth. For this is a joying in Thee, Who art "the truth," O God "my light, health of my countenance, my God" (Psa. xxvii. 1, xlii. 11). This blessed life all desire; this life which alone is blessed, all desire; joy in the truth all desire. I have met with many that would fain deceive; who would choose to be deceived? no one. Where then did they know this happy life, save where they knew the truth also? For they love it also, since they would not be deceived. And when they love a happy life, which is no other than rejoicing in the truth, then also do they love the truth; but they could not love it, were there not some notice of it in their memory. Why then do they not rejoice in it? why are they not happy? because they are more strongly taken up with other things which have more power to make them miserable, than that which they so faintly remember to make them happy. For there is yet a little light in men; let them walk, "let them walk, lest darkness come upon them" (S. John xii. 35).

But why doth "truth bring forth hatred," and why is that man of thine that preacheth truth become their enemy, seeing that the blessed life is loved, which is nothing else than rejoicing in the truth: unless it be that truth is loved only in such a sort, that they who love something else than it, want what they love to be the truth; and because they are unwilling to be deceived, are unwilling to be convinced that they have been deceived? Therefore, for the sake of that thing, which instead of truth they love, they hate the truth. They love her, when she enlightens; but they hate her when she rebukes. For since they would not be deceived, and would deceive, they love her, when she manifests herself, but hate her when she manifests them. Whence she shall so repay them, that they who would not be made manifest by her, she both against their will makes manifest, and herself becometh not manifest unto them. Thus, thus, yea thus doth the mind of man, thus blind and sick, foul and ill-favoured, wish to be hidden, but that aught should be hidden from it, it wills not. But the contrary is requited



it, that itself should not be hidden from the Truth ; but the Truth is hid from it. Yet even thus whilst wretched, it would rather rejoice in truths than in falsehoods. Happy then will it be, when, no distraction interposing, it shall rejoice in that one Truth, by which all things are true.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

*He delighteth that he hath found God, abiding in his memory.*

SEE how far I have travelled in my memory, seeking Thee, O Lord ; and I have not found Thee, without it. Nor have I found any thing concerning Thee, but what I have kept in memory, from the time I learned Thee. For since I learned Thee, I have not forgotten Thee. For where I found Truth, there found I my God, the very Truth ; which since I learned, I have not forgotten. Since then I learned Thee, Thou abidest in my memory ; and there do I find Thee, when I called Thee to remembrance, and delight in Thee. These are my holy delights, which Thou hast given me in Thy mercy, looking upon my poverty.

## CHAPTER XXV.

*Where and how God dwelleth in his memory.*

BUT where in my memory abidest Thou, O Lord, where abidest Thou there ? what manner of lodging hast Thou formed there for Thyself ? what sort of sanctuary hast Thou built for Thyself ? Thou hast given this honour to my memory, to abide in it ; but in what quarter of it Thou abidest, that am I now considering. For in thinking on Thee, I passed beyond such parts of it, as the beasts also have, for I found Thee not there among the images of material things : and I came to those parts to which I committed the affections of my mind, nor did I find Thee there. And I entered into the very seat of my mind, which it hath in my memory, inasmuch as the mind remembers itself also, and Thou wast not there ; for as Thou art not a corporeal image, nor the affection of a living being

(as when we rejoice, condole, desire, fear, remember, forget, or the like); so neither art Thou the mind itself; because Thou art the Lord God of the mind; and all these are changed, but Thou remainest unchangeable over all, and yet hast vouchsafed to dwell in my memory, since I learned Thee. And why seek I now, in what place thereof Thou dwellest, as if there were in truth places therein? Certainly Thou dwellest in it, because I have remembered Thee ever since I learned Thee; and there I find Thee, when I call Thee to remembrance.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

*That God is not in any place; and who is His best servant.*

WHERE then did I find Thee, that I might learn Thee? For in my memory Thou wert not, before I learned Thee. Where then did I find Thee, that I might learn Thee, but in Thee above me? Place there is none; we go backward and forward, and there is no place. Every where, O Truth, dost Thou keep watch over all that consult Thee, and at once respond, though they consult Thee concerning divers matters. Clearly dost Thou answer, though all do not clearly hear. All consult Thee on what they will, though they hear not always what they will. He is Thy best servant, who does not so much look to hear from Thee what accords with his will, but rather to will what he hath heard from Thee.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

*Absent from God, he is attracted by His beauty.*

TOO late I loved Thee, Beauty so old and yet so new, too late I loved Thee! And behold, Thou wert within, and I without, and there I sought Thee; and in my deformity rushed amidst those beauteous forms which Thou hadst made. Thou wert with me, but I was not with Thee. Things held me far from Thee, which unless they had their being in Thee, had no being. Thou didst call, and cry aloud, and break through my deafness. Thou didst blaze

forth, and shine, and scatter my blindness. Thou wert fragrant, and I drew in my breath, and pant for Thee. I tasted, and I hunger and thirst. Thou didst touch me, and I burned for Thy peace.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

*That the life on earth is full of trials.*

WHEN I shall with my whole self cleave to Thee, I shall no where have sorrow, or labour ; and my life shall wholly live, as wholly full of Thee. But now since whom Thou fillest, Thou liftest up, because I am not full of Thee I am a burden to myself. Lamentable joys struggle with joyous sorrows : and on which side standeth victory, I know not. Woe is me ! Lord, have mercy upon me. My evil sorrows struggle with my good joys ; and on which side standeth victory, I know not. Woe is me ! Lord, have mercy upon me. Woe is me ! lo ! I hide not my wounds ; Thou art the Physician, I the sick ; Thou merciful, I miserable. “Is not the life of man upon earth all trial ?” (Job vii. 1, O.V.). Who liketh troubles and difficulties ? Thou biddest us endure them, not love them. None loveth what he endureth, though he loveth to endure. For even though he rejoiceth that he endureth, he would none the less prefer that there were nothing to endure. In adversity I long for prosperity, in prosperity I fear adversity. What middle place is there betwixt these two, where “the life of man is not all trial” ? Woe to the prosperities of the world, once and again, through fear of adversity, and corruption of joy ! Woe to the adversities of the world, once and again, and the third time, from the longing for prosperity, and because adversity itself is hard, and patient endurance suffereth shipwreck. Is not the “life of man upon earth all trial :” without any intermission ?

## CHAPTER XXIX.

*He putteth his hope in the mercy of God.*

AND all my hope is nowhere but in Thy exceeding great mercy. Grant what Thou dost command, and command what Thou wilt. Thou dost enjoin upon us continency. "And when I perceived," saith one, "that no man could be continent, except God gave it, this also was a point of wisdom to know whose gift it was" (Wisd. viii. 21, Vulg.). By continency verily, are we bound up and brought back into One, whence we were dissipated into many. For too little doth he love Thee, who loves any thing with Thee, which he loveth not for Thee. O love, who ever burnest and never consumest! O charity, my God! enkindle me. Thou dost command continency. Grant what Thou commandest, and command what Thou wilt.

## CHAPTER XXX.

*Concerning fleshly desire, and the extent to which it still can influence him.*

THOU dost indeed command me to be continent from "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the ambition of the world" (1 John ii. 16). Thou hast commanded to abstain from concubinage; and concerning marriage itself hast counselled a better course than Thou hast permitted. And since Thou gavest it, it was done, even before I became a dispenser of Thy Sacrament. But there yet live in my memory (whereof I have spoken much) the images of such things, as my habit hath fixed there; and when I am awake they haunt me, though they have lost their power, but in my sleep, not only do they present themselves, so as to give pleasure, but even to obtain assent, and what is very like reality. Yea, so far prevails the illusion of the image, in my soul and in my flesh, that, when asleep, false visions persuade to that which when waking, the true cannot. Am I not then myself, O Lord my God? And yet how much difference there is betwixt myself and myself, within that moment wherein I pass from hence to sleep, or from sleep

return hither. Where is reason then, which, awake, resisteth such suggestions? And should the things themselves be urged on it, it remaineth unshaken. Is it closed up with the eyes? does it slumber with the senses of the body? And whence is it that often even in sleep we resist, and mindful of our purpose, and abiding most chastely in it, yield no assent to such enticements? And yet so much difference there is, that when it falleth out otherwise, upon waking we return to peace of conscience: and by this very difference discover that we did not, what yet we grieve to know was some way done in us.

Is not Thine hand mighty, O Almighty God, to heal all the weaknesses of my soul, and by Thy more abundant grace to quench even the impure motions of my sleep! Thou wilt increase, Lord, Thy gifts more and more in me, that my soul may follow me to Thee, set free from the birdlime of concupiscence; that it be not rebellious against itself, and that even in dreams not only it may not commit those debasing corruptions, through carnal images, to the defilement of the flesh, but not even consent unto them. For that nothing of this sort should have, over the pure affections even of a sleeper, the very least influence, not even such as a thought would restrain,—to work this, not only during life, but even at my present age, is not hard for the Almighty, Who art “able to do above all that we ask or think” (Eph. iii. 20). But what I yet am in this kind of my evil, have I confessed unto my good Lord; “rejoicing with trembling” (Ps. ii. 11), in that which Thou hast given me, and bemoaning that wherein I am still imperfect; hoping, that Thou wilt perfect Thy mercies in me, even to that fullness of peace, which my outward and inward man shall have with Thee, when “death hath been swallowed up in victory” (1 Cor. xv. 54).

#### CHAPTER XXXI.

*Concerning greed and drunkenness.*

THERE is another “evil of the day,” would that it were “sufficient unto it” (S. Matt. vi. 34). For by eating and drinking we repair the daily decays of our body, until Thou “destroy both meats and belly” (1 Cor. vi. 13), when



Thou shalt slay my want with a wondrous sufficiency, and “shalt put on this incorruptible the clothing of incorruption everlasting” (1 Cor. xv. 54). But now the necessity is sweet unto me, and against this sweetness do I fight, lest I be taken captive; and carry on a daily war by fastings; often “bringing my body into subjection” (1 Cor. ix. 27), and my pains are driven away by pleasure. For hunger and thirst are a sort of pain; they burn and kill like a fever, unless the medicine of nourishments come to our aid. But since this is at hand from the comfort of Thy gifts, with which earth and water and air serve our weakness, our calamity is termed pleasure.

This hast Thou taught me, that I should set myself to take food as physic. But while I am passing from the discomfort of emptiness to the content of satisfaction, in the very passage the snare of concupiscence besets me. For that passing is pleasure, nor is there any other way to pass thither, whither we needs must pass. And though health be the cause of eating and drinking, yet a dangerous enjoyment waiteth thereon like a lackey, and oftentimes endeavours to precede it, so as to be the real cause of what I say I do, or wish to do, only for health’s sake; nor is the same moderation in both. For what is enough for health, is too little for pleasure. And it is often uncertain, whether it be the necessary care of the body which gives an appetite for more support, or whether a sensual and deceptive greed is tendering its service. In this uncertainty the unhappy soul grows cheerful, and therein prepares the defence of an excuse, glad that it is not manifest how much may suffice for the moderate need of health, but that beneath the cloak of health it may conceal the matter of enjoyment. These temptations I daily endeavour to resist, and I call on Thy right hand for my preservation, and refer my uncertainties to Thee; because my discretion in this matter is not yet established.

I hear the voice of my God commanding, “Let not your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness” (S. Luke xxi. 34). Drunkenness is far from me; Thou wilt have mercy, that it come not near me. But full feeding sometimes creepeth upon Thy servant: Thou wilt have mercy, that it may be far from me. For “no one can be continent unless Thou give it.” Many things thou givest to us,

who pray ; and whatever good thing we received before we prayed, we received from Thee : and in order that we might afterwards know this did we receive it. A drunkard I never was ; but I have known drunkards made sober by Thee. From Thee then it was, that they who never were such, should not so be, as it was from Thee that they should not always continue such, who have been such ; whose doing also it was that both should know whose doing it was. I heard another voice of Thine, “ Go not after thy lusts, but refrain thyself from thine appetites ” (Ecclus. xviii. 30). Yea by Thy favour have I heard that which I have much loved ; “ neither if we eat, have we the more ; neither if we eat not, shall we have the less ” (1 Cor. viii. 8). That is to say, neither shall the one make me rich nor the other miserable. I heard also another, “ for I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content ; I know both how to abound and how to suffer need. I can do all things through him, which strengtheneth me ” (Phil. iv. 11-13). Behold a soldier of the heavenly camp, not dust such as we are. But “ remember,” Lord, “ that we are dust,” and that of “ dust Thou hast made man ; ” and he “ was lost and is found.” Nor could he of himself do this, because he whom I so loved, saying this through the breath of Thy inspiration, was of the same dust. “ I can do all things,” saith he, “ through Him that strengtheneth me.” Strengthen me that I may be able. Grant what Thou commandest, and command what Thou wilt. He confesses to have received, and when “ he glorieth, he glorieth in the Lord ” (1 Cor. i. 30). Another have I heard begging that he might receive ; “ Take from me,” saith he, “ greediness of the belly ” (Ecclus. xxiii. 6) ; whence it appeareth, O my holy God, that Thou givest, when what Thou commandest to be done is done.

Thou hast taught me, good Father, that “ to the pure, all things are pure ” (Tit. i. 15) ; but that “ it is evil for that man who eateth with offence ” (Rom. xiv. 20), and, that “ every creature of Thine is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving ” (1 Tim. iv. 4) ; and, that “ meat commendeth us not to God ” (1 Cor. viii. 8) ; and, that “ no man should judge us in meat or in drink ” (Col. ii. 16) ; and, that “ he that eateth, let him not despise him that eateth not ; and let not him which eateth not

judge him that eateth" (Rom. xiv. 3). These things have I learned, thanks be to Thee, praise to Thee, my God, my Master, that knockest at my ears, that enlightenest my heart. Take me out of all temptation. I fear not the uncleanness of meat, but the uncleanness of greediness. I know that Noah was permitted to eat all kind of flesh that was good for food; that Elijah was fed with flesh; that John, endued with wonderful abstinence, was not polluted by feeding on living creatures, locusts. I know also that Esau was deceived by lusting for lentiles; and that David blamed himself for his longing for water; and that our King was tempted, not concerning flesh, but bread. And therefore the people in the wilderness also deserved to be reprov'd, not for desiring flesh, but because, in the desire for food, they murmured against the Lord.

Placed then amid these temptations, I strive daily against concupiscence in eating and drinking. For it is not a thing that I can determine to cut off once for all, and never to touch again, as I could in the matter of concubinage. The reins of the throat then must be held in a moderation neither too loose nor too strict. And who is he, O Lord, who is not some little carried beyond the bounds of necessity? whoever he is, he is a great one; let him magnify Thy Name. But I am not such, for "I am a sinful man." Yet do I too magnify Thy name; and "He maketh intercession to Thee" (Rom. viii. 34), for my sins, who "hath overcome the world" (S. John xvi. 33); numbering me among the "weak members of His body;" because "Thine eyes have seen that which is imperfect, and in Thy book shall all be written" (Ps. cxxxix. 16).

## CHAPTER XXXII.

### *Concerning the attractions of pleasant odours.*

WITH the attraction of pleasant odours, I am not much concerned. When absent, I do not miss them; when present, I do not refuse them; yet I am always ready to do without them. So I seem to myself; perchance I am deceived. For that also is a deplorable darkness, in which my ability is hidden from me, so that my mind, enquiring

into herself concerning her own powers, does not reckon herself to be readily trustworthy, because what is really in her is mostly concealed, unless revealed by experience. And no one ought to be free from anxiety in this life, the whole of which is called a "trial," lest he who could be made better from being worse, may not also from being better become worse. Our only hope, only confidence, only sure promise, is Thy mercy.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

*Concerning temptations arising from love of sweet music.*

THE delights of the ear had enmeshed me more firmly and had subdued me; but Thou didst release me, and set me free. Now in those tones, of which Thy words are the life, when they are sung with a sweet and accomplished voice, I find some little satisfaction; though I am not so fast holden of them but that I can arouse myself, when I will. But still, they do demand a place of some honour in my heart, together with the phrases themselves, to gain an entrance for which to me they live, and I have difficulty in assigning to them their proper place. For sometimes I seem to myself to give them more honour than is seemly, feeling our minds to be more religiously and fervently raised unto a flame of devotion, by the holy words themselves when thus sung, than when not; and that all the emotions of our spirit, in accordance with their own variety, have measures suited to them in expression and melody, by some secret and hidden correspondence with which they are called forth. But this gratification of my flesh, to which my mind ought not to be resigned to its weakening, doth oft beguile me, the sense not so waiting upon reason, as patiently to follow her; but though for her alone it has deserved admission, it attempts to outrun her, and to take the lead. Thus in these things I sin without perceiving it; but afterwards I perceive it.

But sometimes in avoiding, without sufficient moderation, this very deception, I err in too great strictness; and sometimes to that degree, as to wish the whole melody of sweet music, to which the Psalms of David are generally set, to



be banished from my ears, aye, and from those of the Church itself; and that mode seems to me safer, which I remember to have been often told me of Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, who made the reader of the psalm intone with so slight an inflection of voice, that it was more like recitation than chanting. Yet again, when I remember the tears which I poured forth at the chants of Thy church, in the beginnings of my recovery of the Faith, and how even now I am moved, not with the singing, but with the things sung, when they are sung with a clear voice and well suited melody, I realise again the great advantage of this institution. Thus I hesitate between the danger of mere enjoyment, and my experience of their wholesomeness; and I am more drawn, though not now declaring an irrevocable opinion, to approve of the custom of chanting in church, that so by the delight of the ears, the weaker minds may rise to the feeling of devotion. Yet when it befalls me to be more moved with the singing, than with the words which are being sung, I confess that I sin grievously, and then I would prefer not to hear the chanter. See now how I am placed. Weep with me, and weep for me, ye who order aright the good within, whence actions proceed. You who do not so act, these things do not affect. But Thou, O Lord my God, hearken; behold, and see, and "have mercy and heal me" (Ps. vi. 2), Thou, in whose presence I am made an enigma to myself; and "this is my infirmity" (Ps. lxxvii. 10).

#### CHAPTER XXXIV.

##### *Concerning pleasures of the eyes.*

THERE remains the pleasure of these eyes of my flesh, concerning which I will make confessions which the ears of Thy temple, ears fraternal and devout, may hear, and so bring to an end the temptations of the "lust of the flesh," which yet assail me, "groaning, and desiring to be clothed upon with my house which is from heaven" (2 Cor. v. 2). The eyes love fair and varied forms, and bright and pleasing colours. Let not these possess my soul; let God rather possess it, who made these things very good indeed, yet is He my good, not they. And these affect me,



waking, the whole day, nor is any rest given me from them, as there is from musical, sometimes, in silence, from all voices. For the light, the very queen of colours, suffusing all that we behold, wherever I am through the day, charms me by its varied play, even when busy upon something else, and not thinking of it. Indeed so greatly doth it ingratiate itself, that if it be suddenly withdrawn, it is regretfully sought for; and if absent long, saddeneth the mind.

O Thou Light, which Tobias saw, when though these eyes were blinded, he used to teach his son the way of life; and went before him on the foot of charity, never straying; or which Isaac saw, his fleshly "eyes being dim" and closed by old age, when it was permitted him to bless his sons without recognising them, but in blessing to recognise them; or which Jacob saw, when he also, blind through great age, with illumined heart, threw light upon the tribes of the people that should be, foreshewn in the persons of his sons; and laid his hands upon his grandsons by Joseph, mystically crossed, not as their father by his outward eye wanted to correct them, but according to his own inward discernment! This is light, one it is, and one are all who see and love it. But that corporeal light of which I was speaking seasoneth the life of this world for her blind lovers, with an enticing and dangerous sweetness. But they who know how to praise Thee for it, "O God who hast created all,"\* take it up in that hymn of Thine, and are not taken up with it in their sleep. Such would I be. These seductions of the eyes I resist, lest my feet wherewith I walk upon Thy way be entangled; and I lift up mine invisible eyes to Thee, that Thou wouldest "pluck my feet out of the net" (Ps. xxv. 15), Thou dost repeatedly pluck them out, for they are ensnared. Thou ceasest not to pluck them out, though I often am taken in snares scattered on all sides; because "Thou that keepest Israel shalt neither slumber nor sleep" (Ps. cxxi. 4).

What numberless things made by various arts and crafts, in vestures, shoes, vessels, and manufactures of all kinds, pictures too, and divers images, and these far exceeding all necessary and moderate use and all pious meaning, have men added to the enticements of the eyes; outwardly

\* See *ante*, Book ix., cap. xii.

following what themselves make, inwardly forsaking Him by whom themselves were made, and destroying that which themselves have been made ! But I, my God and my Beauty, do hence also sing a hymn to Thee, and do sacrifice praise to Him who sanctifieth me ; because those beautiful things which are conveyed through men's souls to the hands of artificers, come from that Beauty, Which is above our souls, for which my soul by day and night doth sigh. But those who make and those who pursue these outward beauties draw thence indeed the means of appreciating them, but draw not thence the means of using them. And He is there, though they perceive Him not, that so they might not wander, but "keep their strength for Thee" (Ps. lviii. 10, Vulg.), and not scatter it abroad upon delicious wearinesses. And I, though I speak and see this, entangle my steps with these beauties ; but Thou pluckest me out, O Lord, Thou pluckest me out ; "because Thy loving-kindness is before my eyes" (Ps. xxvi. 3). For I am taken miserably, and Thou pluckest me out mercifully, though sometimes, when I had fallen lightly upon them, I perceive it not ; sometimes with pain, because I had stuck fast in them.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

### *Concerning the temptation of curiosity.*

TO this is added another form of temptation more manifoldly dangerous. For besides that lust of the flesh which consists in the delight of all senses and pleasures, wherein its slaves, who go far from Thee, waste and perish, there is in the soul, by means of the same senses of the body, a certain vain and curious desire, cloaked under the title of knowledge and science, not of delighting in the flesh, but of acquiring experience through the flesh. And because this is situated in the appetite for knowing, and the eyes are chief among the senses as sources of knowledge, it is called in the Divine language, "The lust of the eyes" (1 S. John ii. 16). For, to see, belongeth properly to the eyes alone. Yet we make use of this word also of the other senses, when we employ them in seeking knowledge. For we do not say, hark how it flashes, or smell how it

glows, or taste how it shines, or feel how it gleams ; for all these are said to be seen. And yet we say not only, see how it shines, which the eyes alone can perceive ; but also, see how it sounds, see how it smells, see how it tastes, see how hard it is. And so the general experience of the senses, as was said, is called "The lust of the eyes," because the office of seeing, wherein the eyes hold the first place, the other senses by a sort of comparison adopt for themselves, when they are seeking a knowledge of anything.

But by this may more evidently be discerned, wherein pleasure and wherein curiosity is the object of the senses ; for pleasure seeketh objects beautiful, melodious, fragrant, savoury, soft ; but curiosity, the opposites also of all these, for the sake of making trial of them, not with the object of undergoing annoyance, but from the lust of experiment and knowing. For what pleasure is there in seeing in a mangled corpse what makes one shudder ? And yet if it be lying near, they flock thither, to be made sad, and to turn pale. They even fear that they may see it in their dreams ; as if any one forced them to see it when they were awake, or any report of its beauty induced them. Thus also in the other senses, which it were long to go through. From this disease of curiosity are certain marvels exhibited in shows. Hence men go on to search out the hidden powers of nature (which is beyond us), which to know profits not, and wherein men desire nothing but to know. Hence is it also, if any perverted knowledge, for the same end, is sought by means of arts magical. Hence also, in religion itself, is God tempted, when signs and wonders are demanded of Him, not desired for any purpose of salvation, but only for the attainment of knowledge.

In this so vast forest, full of snares and perils, behold many of them I have cut away, and driven from my heart, as Thou hast granted me to do, O God of my salvation. And yet when dare I say, since so many things of this kind clamour on every side about our daily life—when dare I say, that nothing of this sort engages my attention, or causes in me an empty interest ? True, the theatres do not now carry me away, nor care I to know the transits of the stars, nor did my soul ever seek oracles from ghosts ; all sacrilegious rites I detest. From Thee, O Lord my God, to whom I owe humble and single-hearted service, by what

devices and suggestions doth the enemy tamper with me, so that I may seek some sign ! But I beseech Thee by our King, and by our pure and holy country, Jerusalem, that as any consenting thereto is far from me, so may it ever be further and further. But when I pray Thee for the salvation of any, my end and intention is far different. Thou givest and wilt give me the will to follow Thee, who doest what Thou wilt.

Notwithstanding, in how many most petty and contemptible things is our curiosity daily tempted, and how often we give way, who can recount ? How often do we at first appear to bear with people, telling idle tales, so as not to "offend the weak," and then little by little render an eager attention ? I am not now a spectator of a dog coursing a hare, when it is done in the circus ; but yet in a field, if I happen to be passing by, that sport will possibly divert my mind from some great subject of thought, and direct it to itself, not forcing me to stray from the road, with the body of my beast, but in the inclination of my mind. And unless Thou, having shown me my infirmity, didst speedily admonish me either through the sight itself, by some contemplation to rise towards Thee, or altogether to despise and pass it by, I grow dull and stupid over it. What, when sitting at home, a lizard catching flies, or a spider entangling them as they rush into her nets, oftentimes takes my attention ? Is it true that the thing is not the same, because the creatures are but small ? I go on from them to praise Thee the wonderful Creator and Orderer of all things, but this is not what I begin to take notice of. It is one thing to rise quickly, another not to fall. And of such things is my life full ; and my one hope is Thy exceeding great mercy. For when our heart becomes the receptacle of such things, and entertains the throngs of this abundant vanity, this causes often interruptions and distractions in our prayers, and whilst in Thy presence we direct the voice of our heart to Thine ears, this so great concern is broken off, by the rushing in of trifling thoughts, I know not whence.



## CHAPTER XXXVI.

*Concerning the love of praise, and fear of blame.*

**S**HALL we then account this also among things of no importance, or shall aught restore us to hope, save Thy complete mercy, since Thou hast begun to change us? And Thou knowest how far Thou hast already changed me, who first dost heal me of the desire of excusing myself, so that Thou mayest be merciful to all my other "iniquities, and heal all my infirmities, and redeem my life from corruption, and crown me with mercy and pity, and satisfy my desire with good things" (Ps. ciii. 3-5); who didst curb my pride with Thy fear, and tame my neck to Thy "yoke." And now I bear it and it is "light" unto me, because so hast Thou promised, and hast made it; and verily so it was, and I knew it not, when I feared to take it upon me.

But, O Lord, Thou who art alone a Lord without pride, because Thou art the only true Lord, who hast no lord; hath this third kind of temptation also ceased from me, or can it cease through this whole life? To wish, namely, to be feared and loved of men, for no other end, but that we may have a joy therein which is no joy? A miserable life this and a foul boastfulness! Hence it comes that men do not entirely love Thee, nor purely fear Thee. And therefore "Thou resistest the proud, and givest grace to the humble" (1 S. Peter v. 5); yea, Thou dost "thunder" above the ambitions of the world, and the "foundations of the hills shake" (Ps. xviii. 7). Because now certain duties of human society make it necessary to be loved and feared of men, the adversary of our true blessedness presseth upon us, everywhere spreading his snares of "well-done, well-done;" that while we greedily gather them, we may through our heedlessness be taken, and lay down our joy in Thy truth, and rest it in the deceit of men; and take pleasure in being loved and feared not for Thee, but instead of Thee; and thus having been made like him, he may have them for his own, not in the fellowship of charity, but as partakers of his torment, who determined to "set his throne in the north" (Is. xiv. 14), that dark and chilled they might serve him who in a perverted and crooked way doth imitate Thee. But we, O Lord, behold we are Thy "little flock" (S. Luke



xii. 32), possess Thou us. Stretch out Thy wings, and let us flee beneath them. Be Thou our glory; let us be loved for Thee, and Thy word feared in us. He that would be praised of men, when Thou blamest, will not be defended of men, when Thou judgest; nor delivered, when Thou condemnest. But when it is not "the sinner that is praised in the desires of his soul, nor he that doeth unrighteousness that is blessed" (Ps. ix. 24, Vulg.), but man is praised for some gift which Thou hast given him, and he rejoices more at the praise for himself than that he hath the gift for which he is praised, he also is praised while Thou blamest. And better then is he who gave the praise, than he who is praised. For God's gift in man pleased the one, while man's gift pleased the other more than God's.

#### CHAPTER XXXVII.

*He confesseth that he loveth praise; but suggests that there may be a right use of it.*

BY these temptations we are assailed daily, O Lord; without ceasing are we assailed. Our daily "furnace" is the tongue of men. And in this kind also Thou commandest us continency. Give what Thou commandest, and command what Thou wilt. Thou knowest the groaning of my heart to Thee concerning this matter, and the rivers of mine eyes. For I cannot learn how far I am more cleansed from this plague, and I much fear my "secret sins," which Thine eyes know, mine do not. For in other kinds of temptations I have some sort of power of examining myself; in this hardly any. For I see, in regard of the pleasures of the flesh, and vain curiosity for knowledge, how far I have attained the power of refraining my mind, when I am without them, whether by my own choice, or through their absence. For then I ask myself how much more or less troublesome it is to me, not to have them? Even riches, which are sought on this account, that they may make provision for some one or two, or all of these three lusts, if the soul cannot discern, whether, when it hath them, it despiseth them, they may be cast aside, that so it may prove itself. But what can we do so as to be free from

praise, and so put it to the test? Must we live ill, yea so abandonedly and atrociously, that no one should know without detesting us? What greater madness can be said, or thought of? But if praise both is and ought to be the accompaniment of good living and good works, it behoves us to forsake its company no more than the good life itself. Yet I do not perceive whether I could calmly or impatiently bear to be without anything, unless it be absent.

What then do I confess unto Thee in this kind of temptation, O Lord? What, but that I delight in praise, but in truth itself, more than in praise? For were I asked whether I should prefer to be in some frenzy, or in error about all things, and so to receive the praise of all men; or to be firm, and most confident in the truth, and yet to receive the blame of all, I know which I should choose. But yet I am unwilling that the commendation of a stranger's words should even increase my joy for any good in me. Yet I own, it does not only increase it, but blame also diminishes it. And when I am troubled at this my misery, an excuse occurs to me, which of what value it is, Thou God knowest, for it leaves me uncertain. For since Thou hast commanded us not continency alone, that is, from what things to restrain our regard, but also righteousness, that is, whereon to bestow it, and hast willed us to love not Thee only, but our neighbour also; often, when I am delighted with the praise of some one of good understanding, I seem to myself to be taking delight in the profit, or hope of it, of my neighbour, and on the other hand, to be grieved for evil in him, when I hear him blame either what he is ignorant of, or what is good. For sometimes I am grieved at my own praise, either when those things be praised in me, in which I am displeasing to myself: or when lesser and slight good things are more highly esteemed than they ought to be. But again, how do I know? Am I so affected for this reason, namely that I do not like my commender to differ from me about myself: not because I am anxious for his advantage, but because those same good things which please me in myself, please me more when they please another also? For somehow I am not praised when my opinion of myself is not praised, since indeed either those things are praised, which displease me; or those more, which please me less. Am I then doubtful of myself in this matter?

Behold, in Thee, O Truth, I see, that I ought not to be moved at my own praises, for my own sake, but for the good of my neighbour. And whether it be so with me, I know not. For herein I know less of myself, than of Thee. I beseech Thee, now, O my God, discover to me myself also, that I may confess unto my brethren, who are to pray for me, wherein I find myself unsound. Let me examine myself again more diligently. If in my praise I am moved with the good of my neighbour, why am I less moved if another be unjustly dispraised than if it be myself? Why am I more stung by reproach cast upon myself, than at that cast upon another, with the same injustice, before me? Know I not this also? or is it at last that I “deceive myself,” and do not the truth before Thee in my heart and tongue? This madness put far from me, O Lord, lest mine own mouth be to me the “sinner’s oil to make fat my head” (Ps. cxli. 5, Vulg.); “I am poor and needy” (Ps. cxix. 22), but better while in hidden groanings I displease myself, and seek Thy mercy, until what is lacking in my defective state here newed and perfected, even unto that peace which the eye of the proud knoweth not.

#### CHAPTER XXXVIII.

*That vain-glory sometimes hideth beneath an appearance of contempt of itself.*

YET the word, which cometh out of the mouth, and deeds known to men, bring with them a most perilous temptation through the love of praise: which, to establish a certain excellency of our own, solicits and collects men’s suffrages. It tempts, even when it is reprov’d by myself in myself, on the very ground that it is reprov’d. And often a man glories more vainly of the very contempt of vain glory; and so it is no longer contempt of vain-glory, whereof he glories. For he doth not despise it when he glories inwardly.

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

*Of self-complacency.*

THERE is another evil within, arising from the same kind of temptation ; whereby men become vain from self-complacency, though they please not, or displease, or do not care to please others. But pleasing themselves, they much displease Thee, not only because they take pleasure in things not good, as if good, but in Thy good things, as though their own ; or even if as Thine, yet as though for their own deserts ; or even if as though from Thy grace, yet not rejoicing with fellowship, but even grudging them to others. In all these and the like perils and travails, Thou seest the trembling of my heart ; and I rather feel that my wounds are healed by Thee, than that they are not inflicted by myself.

## CHAPTER XL.

*He summeth up his former description of his search after God, and declares the sweetness of complete communion with God, sometimes vouchsafed to him.*

WHERE hast Thou not walked with me, O Truth, teaching me what to beware, and what to desire ; when I referred to Thee what I could discover here below, and took counsel with Thee ? With my outward senses, as I could, I surveyed the world, and observed the life, which my body hath from me, and these my senses. Thence I entered into the recesses of my memory, those manifold and spacious chambers, wonderfully furnished with innumerable stores ; and I considered, and was afraid, and could discern nothing of them without Thee, and found that none of them was Thee. Nor was I myself, who found out these things, who went over them all, and endeavoured to distinguish them, and to appraise them all according to their proper worth, taking some things upon the report of my senses, questioning about others which I felt to be mingled with myself, distinguishing and enumerating the reporters themselves, and in the wide resources of my memory busying myself with some things, storing away others, drawing out

others ; nor yet was I myself when I did this, *i.e.* that my power whereby I did it, neither was it Thou, for Thou art the abiding light, which I consulted concerning all these, whether they were, what they were, and how they ought to be valued. And I heard Thee directing and commanding me ; and this I often do. This is my delight, and as often as I can get relaxation from works of necessity, I fly to this pleasure. Nor in all these which I run over consulting Thee, can I find any safe place for my soul, except in Thee, in whom my scattered powers are may be gathered, so that nothing of my being may depart from Thee. And sometimes Thou admittest me to an affection, very unusual, in my inmost soul ; rising to a strange sweetness, which if it were perfected in me, I know not what could ever be which this life would not be. But by the weights of my miseries I fall back again into those lower things, and am sucked back by my wonted habits, and am holden fast, and greatly weep, but am greatly holden. So great a power hath the burden of habit. Here I can stay, but would not ; there I would be, but cannot ; both ways, miserable.

## CHAPTER XLI.

*He summeth up his confession with regard to the triple lust.*

THUS then have I considered the diseases of my sins in that threefold lust, and I have called on Thy right hand for my salvation. For with a wounded heart have I beheld Thy brightness, and stricken back I said, "Who can attain thither?" "I am cast away from the sight of Thine eyes" (Ps. xxxi. 22). Thou art the Truth who presidest over all, but I through my covetousness would not indeed lose Thee, but would with Thee possess a lie ; as no man would in such wise speak falsely, as himself to be ignorant of the truth. So then I lost Thee, because Thou vouchsafest not to be possessed together with a lie.



## CHAPTER XLII.

*Of the deceits of the Devil, which overtake them who seek for Angelic Mediation.*

WHOM could I find to reconcile me to Thee? must I go canvassing the Angels? by what prayer? by what sacraments? Many endeavouring to return unto Thee, and of themselves unable, have, as I hear, tried this, and fallen into a desire of curious visions, and have been accounted worthy of such delusions. For they, being high minded, sought Thee by the pride of learning, swelling out rather, than smiting upon, their breasts, and so by the likeness of their own state of heart, brought down upon themselves the "powers of the air" (Eph. ii. 2), the fellow-conspirators and companions of their pride, by whom, through magical influences, they were deceived, seeking a mediator, by whom they might be purged, and there was none. For it was the Devil "transforming himself into an Angel of light" (2 Cor. xi. 14); and it much enticed proud flesh, that he had no fleshly body. For they were mortal, and sinners; but Thou, Lord, to whom they proudly sought to be reconciled, art immortal, and without sin. But a mediator between God and man, must have something like to God, something like to men; lest being in both like to men, he should be too far away from God: or if in both like God, too far away from men; and so not be a mediator. That deceiving mediator then, by whom in Thy secret judgments pride deserved to be deluded, "hath one thing in common with man, that is sin; another, he would seem to have in common with God, namely, that not being clothed with the mortality of flesh, would vaunt himself for immortal. But since 'the wages of sin is death' (Rom. vi. 23); this also he hath in common with men, that with them he should be condemned to death."

## CHAPTER XLIII.

*The Man Christ Jesus the only Mediator between God and Man. In Him his soul is satisfied.*

**B**UT the true Mediator, Whom in Thy secret mercy Thou hast shewed to the humble, and didst send, that by His example also they might learn that same humility, that "Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. ii. 5), appeared betwixt mortal sinners and the immortal Just One; sharing with men, mortality, with God, righteousness: so that since the wages of righteousness is life and peace, He might by a righteousness conjoined with God, make void that death of justified sinners, which it was His will to share in common with them. Hence He was shewed forth to holy men of old; that they too through faith in His Passion to come, as we through faith in it passed, might be saved. In so far as He was man, He was a Mediator; in that He was the Word, He was not in a middle place, because equal with God, and God with God, and together [with the Holy Spirit] one God.

How hast Thou loved us, O good Father, who "sparedst not Thine only Son, but deliveredst Him up for us ungodly!" (Rom. viii. 32). How hast Thou loved us, for whom, "He that thought it not robbery to be equal with Thee, was made subject even to the death of the cross" (Phil. ii. 6). He alone "free among the dead" (Ps. lxxxviii. 5), "having power to lay down His life, and power to take it again" (S. John x. 18): for us to Thee both Victor and Victim, and therefore Victor, because the Victim; for us to Thee Priest and Sacrifice, and therefore Priest because the Sacrifice; making us to Thee sons instead of servants, by being begotten of Thee, and becoming servant to us. Rightly then is my hope strong in Him, that Thou "wilt heal all my infirmities" by Him Who "sitteth at Thy right hand and maketh intercession for us" (Rom. viii. 34), otherwise I should despair. For many and great are those infirmities of mine, many they are, and great; but Thy medicine is greater. We might think that Thy Word was far removed from any union with man, and despair of ourselves, had He not been "made flesh and dwelt among us" (S. John i. 14).

Affrighted with my sins and the burden of my misery, I had devised in my heart, and purposed to "flee to the wilderness;" but Thou didst forbid me, and strengthen me, saying, "Therefore Christ died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them" (2 Cor. v. 15). See, Lord, I "cast my care upon Thee" that I may live, and I will "consider the wondrous things of Thy law" (Ps. cxix. 18). Thou knowest my unskilfulness, and my weakness; teach me, and heal me. He, Thine only Son, "in Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. ii. 3), hath redeemed me with His blood. "Let not the proud speak evil of me;" because I think upon the price of my Redemption, and eat and drink, and communicate it; and being "poor," I desire to be satisfied from Him amongst those who "eat and are satisfied. And they shall praise the Lord that seek Him" (Ps. xx. 26). \*

\* The remaining three books in the Latin text consist entirely of a commentary upon the early chapters of Genesis, and are seldom published with the "Confessions."

THE END.











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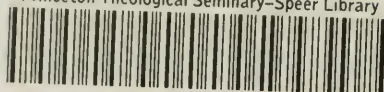
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